

# **GCSE**

# **Media Studies**



## **Knowledge**

## **Booklet:**

## **Component 1**

## 13. Glossary

ACTION CODE	Something that happens in the narrative that tells the audience that some action will follow, for example in a scene from a soap opera, a couple are intimate in a bedroom and the camera shows the audience the husband's car pulling up at the front of the house.
ACTIVE AUDIENCE	Audiences who actively engage in selecting media products to consume and interpret their meanings.
ANCHORAGE	The words that accompany an image (still or moving) give the meaning associated with that image. If the caption or voiceover is changed, then so may be the way in which the audience interprets the image. An image with an anchor is a closed text; the audience are given a preferred reading. A text without an anchor is an open text as the audience can interpret it as they wish.  The same image of a school in a local newspaper could have a negative or a positive headline, which may change the way in which the same image is viewed by the reader.
APPEAL	The way in which products attract and interest an audience e.g. through the use of stars, familiar genre conventions etc.
ASPIRATIONAL	In terms of a media text one that encourages the audience to want more money, up market consumer items and a higher social position.
ATTRACT	How media producers appeal to audiences to encourage them to consume the product.
AUDIENCE CATEGORISATION	How media producers group audiences (e.g. by age, gender, ethnicity) to target their products.
AUDIENCE CONSUMPTION	The way in which audiences engage with media products (e.g. viewing a TV programme, playing a video game, reading a blog or magazine). Methods of consumption have changed significantly due to the development of digital technologies.
AUDIENCE INTERPRETATION	The way in which audiences 'read' the meanings in, and make sense of, media products.
AUDIENCE RESPONSE	How audiences react to media products e.g. by accepting the intended meanings (preferred reading).
BRAND IDENTITY	The association the audience make with the brand, for example <i>Chanel</i> or <i>Nike</i> , built up over time and reinforced by the advertising campaigns and their placement.
BROADSHEET	A larger newspaper that publishes more serious news, for example <i>The Daily Telegraph</i> has maintained its broadsheet format.
CAPTION	Words that accompany an image that explain its meaning.

CHANNEL IDENTITY	The aspects which make the channel recognisable to audiences and different from any other channel. Presenters, stars, programme genres and specific programmes all contribute to a channel's identity.
CIRCULATION	The dissemination of media products - the method will depend on the media form, e.g. circulation of print magazines, broadcast of television programmes etc.
COLLOQUIAL LANGUAGE	This is conversational language where the words used are different from and less formal than those in written speech.
COMMERCIAL CHANNELS	These are channels like ITV and Channel 4 that raise their money through advertising, unlike the BBC which currently gets its money from the licence fee.
CONNOTATION	The suggested meanings attached to a sign, e.g., the red car in the advert suggests speed and power.
CONVENTIONS	What the audience expects to see in a particular media text, for example the conventions of science fiction films may include: aliens, scientists, other worlds, gadgets, representations of good and evil. Useful headings to discuss conventions are: characters, setting, iconography, narrative, technical codes and representation.
CONVERGENCE	The coming together of previously separate media industries and/or platforms; often the result of advances in technology whereby one device or platform contains a range of different features. The mobile phone, for example, allows the user to download and listen to music, view videos, tweet artists etc. All this can be done through one portable device.
COVER LINES	These suggest the content to the reader and often contain teasers and rhetorical questions. These relate to the genre of the magazine.
CROSS-PLATFORM MARKETING	In media terms, a text that is distributed and exhibited across a range of media formats or platforms. This may include film, television, print, radio and the Internet.
DEMOGRAPHIC CATEGORY	A group in which consumers are placed according to their age, sex, income, profession, etc. The categories range from A to E where categories A and B are the wealthiest and most influential members of society.
DENOTATION	The description of what you can see/hear in a media text, e.g. the car in the advert is red.
DIEGETIC SOUND	Sound that comes from the fictional world and can be seen, for example the sound of a gun firing, the cereal being poured into the bowl in an advert, etc.
DISRUPTION	This is what changes the balance in the story world; it may be a character or an event, for example a murder.
DISTRIBUTION	The methods by which media products are delivered to audiences, including the marketing campaign. These methods

	will depend upon the product (for example, distribution companies in the film industry organise the release of the films).
DIVERSIFICATION	Where media organisations who have specialised in producing media products in one form move into producing content across a range of forms.
ENCODING AND DECODING	Media producers encode messages and meanings in products that are decoded, or interpreted, by audiences.
ENIGMA CODE	A narrative device which increases tension and audience interest by only releasing bits of information, for example teasers in a film trailer. Narrative strands that are set up at the beginning of a drama/film that makes the audience ask questions; part of a restricted narrative.
EQUILIBRIUM	In relation to narrative, a state of balance or stability (in Todorov's theory the equilibrium is disrupted and restored).
FAN	An enthusiast or aficionado of a particular media form or product.
FEATURE	In magazine terms, the main, or one of the main, stories in an edition. Features are generally located in the middle of the magazine, and cover more than one or two pages.
FOUR Cs	This stands for Cross Cultural Consumer Characteristics and was a way of categorising consumers into groups through their motivational needs. The main groups were Mainstreamers, Aspirers, Explorers, Succeeders and Reformers.
FRANCHISE	An entire series of, for example, a film including the original film and all those that follow.
GATEKEEPERS	The people responsible for deciding the most appropriate stories to appear in newspapers. They may be the owner, editor or senior journalists. They will only let the stories most appropriate for the ideology of the paper 'through the gate'.
GENRE	Media texts can be grouped into genres that all share similar conventions. Science fiction is a genre, as are teenage magazines, etc.
GLOBAL	Worldwide - e.g. a media product with global reach is a product that is distributed around the world.
HOUSE STYLE	What makes the magazine recognisable to its readers every issue. The house style is established through the choice of colour, the layout and design, the font style, the content and the general 'look' of the publication.
HYBRID GENRE	Media texts that incorporate elements of more than one genre and are therefore more difficult to classify. <i>Dr Who</i> , for example, is a science fiction/fantasy television drama.

ICONOGRAPHY	The props, costumes, objects and backgrounds associated with a particular genre; for example, in a police series you would expect to see, uniforms, blue flashing lights, scene of crime tape and police radios.
INDEPENDENT FILM	A film made outside of the financial and artistic control of a large film company. A truly independent film should be privately conceived and funded. However, few films made are really 'independent'. This more commonly refers to a film that is made by a smaller film company on a low budget.
INDEPENDENT RECORD LABEL	A record label that operates without the funding of and not necessarily linked to a major record label.
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY	A legal concept which refers to creations of the mind for which the owner's rights are recognised. These rights cover such intangible assets such as music, literary and artistic works; discoveries and inventions; words, phrases, symbols, and designs.
INTERACTIVE AUDIENCE	The ways in which audiences can become actively involved with a product, for example by posting a response to a blog or live tweeting during a television programme.
INTERTEXTUAL	Where one media text makes reference to aspects of another text within it. For example, referencing a scene from a film in a television advertisement. Audiences enjoy recognising intertextual references.
INTERTEXTUALITY	Where one media product references another text, for example a music video recreating visual codes that have been used in a film.
LAYOUT AND DESIGN	The way in which a page has been designed to attract the target audience. This includes the font styles used, the positioning of text and images and the use of colour.
LINEAR NARRATIVE	Where the narrative unfolds in chronological order from beginning to end.
MAINSTREAM	These are media products that are the most popular at the time and tend to be the most conventional.
MARKETING	This is the way in which an organisation tells its audience about a product. It will use different ways in order to do this, for example a film company will produce trailers and posters to promote a new film. It will also make sure that the stars appear on chat shows and give interviews just before the release of the film.
MASCULINITY	The perceived characteristics generally considered to define what it is to be a man. These can differ according to sociological variations and cultural changes.
MASS AUDIENCE	Traditional idea of the audience as one large, homogenous group.

MASTHEAD	This is the title and design of the title of the magazine. The name and font style may give a clue to the genre.
MEDIA CONGLOMERATE	A company that owns other companies across a range of media platforms. This increases their domination of the market and their ability to distribute and exhibit their product.
MEDIA FORMS	Types of media products, for example television, newspapers, music videos.
MEDIA LANGUAGE	The specific elements of a media product that communicate meanings to audiences, e.g. visual codes, audio codes, technical codes, language.
MEDIA PLATFORM	The range of different ways of communicating with an audience, for example newspapers, the Internet, and television.
MEDIATION	The way in which a media text is constructed in order to represent the producer of the text's version of reality; constructed through selection, organisation and focus.
MISE-EN-SCENE	In analysis of moving image products, how the combination of images in the frame creates meaning; how individual shots in a film or photograph have been composed.
MISREPRESENTATION	Certain social groups (usually minority groups) may be represented in a way that is inappropriate and not based on reality.
MODE OF ADDRESS	The way in which a media text 'speaks to' its target audience. For example, teenage magazines have a chatty informal mode of address; the news has a more formal mode of address.
NARRATIVE	The 'story' that is told by the media text. All media texts, not just fictional texts, have a narrative. For example, magazines have a clear beginning, middle and end. Most narratives are linear and follow a specific structure (Todorov).
NEWS AGENDA	The list of stories that may appear in a particular paper. The items on the news agenda will reflect the style and ethos of the paper.
NICHE AUDIENCE	A relatively small audience with specialised interests, tastes, and backgrounds.
NON-DIEGETIC SOUND	Sound that is out of the shot, for example a voiceover or romantic mood music.
NON-LINEAR NARRATIVE	Here the narrative manipulates time and space. It may begin in the middle and then include flashbacks and other narrative devices.
OPINION LEADERS	People in society who may affect the way in which others interpret a particular media text. With regard to advertising, this may be a celebrity or other endorser recommending a product.

PASSIVE AUDIENCE	The idea (now widely regarded as outdated) that audiences do not actively engage with media products, but consume and accept the messages that producers communicate.
PERSONA	The image or personality that someone, for example a celebrity, presents to the audience.
PERSONAL IDENTITY	This means your ability to relate to something that happens in a text because it has happened to you.
POLITICAL BIAS	Where a newspaper may show support for a political party through its choice of stories, style of coverage, cartoons, etc. It may be subtle and implicit, or explicit as in the case of the tabloids on election day.
PRIVILEGED SPECTATOR POSITION	Where the camera places the audience in a superior position within the narrative. The audience can then anticipate what will follow.
PRODUCTION	The process by which media products are constructed.
PRODUCTION VALUES	These are the elements of the text that tell the audience how much it cost to make. A film with high production values will include big name stars, expensive locations or special effects.
MEDIA PRODUCTS	Media texts, including television programmes, magazines, video games, newspapers etc. as well as online, social and participatory platforms.
PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTER	A radio and television broadcaster that is independent of government financed by public money and is seen to offer a public service by catering for a range of tastes.
REALISM	A style of presentation that claims to portray 'real life' accurately and authentically.
RED TOP	A British newspaper that has its name in red at the top of the front page. Red-tops have a lot of readers, but are not considered to be as serious as other newspapers.
REGULATOR	A person or body that supervises a particular industry.
REPERTOIRE OF ELEMENTS	Key features that distinguish one genre from another.
REPRESENTATION	The way in which key sections of society are presented by the media, e.g. gender, race, age, the family, etc. One important example in the media is how women are represented in magazines.
RHETORICAL QUESTION	A question asked for effect where no answer is expected. For example, in magazines the focus of the question may encourage the reader to engage in self-reflection.
SELECTION AND COMBINATION	Media producers actively choose elements of media language and place them alongside others to create specific representations or versions of reality.



SEXUAL OBJECTIFICATION	The practice of regarding a person as an object to be viewed only in terms of their sexual appeal and with no consideration of any other aspect of their character or personality.
SIGN/CODE	Something which communicates meaning, e.g., colours, sounds. The meaning of the sign may change according to the context, e.g., the colour red can mean passion, love, danger or speed depending on how and where it is used.
SPECIALISED AUDIENCE	A non-mass, or niche, audience that may be defined by a particular social group (for example young, aspirational females) or by a specific interest (for example skydiving).
SPLASH	The story that is given the most prominence on the front page of a newspaper.
STEREOTYPE	An exaggerated representation of someone or something. It is also where a certain group are associated with a certain set of characteristics, for example all Scotsmen are mean, blondes are dumb, etc. Stereotypes can be quick ways of communicating information in adverts and dramas, e.g. the rebellious teenager in a soap opera, as they are easily recognisable to audiences.
STRIPPED	a technique used in radio and television whereby a certain programme is broadcast at the same time every day. In radio this attracts an audience who associate a particular programme with their daily routine, for example driving home from work.
SUB-GENRE	Where a large genre is sub-divided into smaller genres, each of which has their own set of conventions. For example, the television genre can be sub- divided into teen drama, hospital drama, costume drama, etc.
SUBJECT-SPECIFIC LEXIS	The specific language and vocabulary used to engage the audience. Subject-specific lexis used on the front cover of a magazine will make the reader feel part of the group who belong to the world of that magazine. For example, terminology used on the front covers of gaming magazines.
SYNERGY	The combination of elements to maximise profits within a media organisation or product. For example, where a film soundtrack sells the film and the film sells the soundtrack.
TABLOID	Refers to the dimensions of a newspaper; a tabloid is smaller and more compact in size. However, there are further connotations attached to the term and it also tends to refer to a newspaper whose content focuses on lighter news, for example celebrity gossip, sport and television.
TAGLINE	This is the short phrase or slogan that appears in trailers and on posters. It gives a clue to the genre and storyline of the film and often includes an enigma.
TARGET AUDIENCE	The people at whom the media text is aimed.



TECHNICAL CODES	These are the way in which the text has been produced to communicate meanings and are part of media language (see Section 8).
UNDERREPRESENTATION	Certain social groups (usually minority groups) may be rarely represented or be completely absent from media products.
USES AND GRATIFICATIONS THEORY	Suggests that active audiences seek out and use different media texts in order to satisfy a need and experience different pleasures.
VERTICAL INTEGRATION	Vertically integrated companies own all or most of the chain of production for the product. For example a film company that also owns a chain of multiplex cinemas to exhibit the film and merchandise outlets.
VIEWPOINTS	Different perspectives in relation to values, attitudes, beliefs or ideologies.
VIRAL MARKETING	Where the awareness of the product or the advertising campaign is spread through less conventional ways including social networks and the Internet. Viral marketing is so named because many of the messages use 'hosts' to spread themselves rapidly, like a biological virus.
VISUAL CODES	The visual aspects of the product that construct meaning and are part of media language, for example clothing, expression, and gesture (see Section 8).

# Quality Street print advert (1956)



**CHOCOLATE  
STRAWBERRY CUP**  
*Strawberry jam and cream  
encased in milk chocolate.*

**HARROGATE TOFFEE**  
*The delicious, smooth toffee  
with a most distinctive flavour.*

**CHOCOLATE TOFFEE FINGER**  
*Delicious toffee covered  
with plain chocolate.*

**What a delicious dilemma!**

**18** delightfully different  
toffees and chocolates in

**Mackintosh's  
'Quality Street'**

JOHN MACKINTOSH & SONS LTD., HALIFAX

Neil Baylis / Alamy Stock Photo

# Quality Street

## print advert

### (1956)

#### Component 1: Exploring the Media

**Focus areas:**  
**Media language**  
**Representation**  
**Media contexts**

#### PRODUCT CONTEXT

- *Quality Street* sweet tin made by Mackintosh.
- Originally created in 1936, inspired by the name of a play by J.M Barrie.
- In the 1930s, only the wealthy could afford chocolate boxes but the creator Harold Mackintosh aimed to sell them at a more reasonable cost to appeal to working families. By the 1950s, when this campaign started, society was in a post-rationing period where luxuries were once again becoming an acceptable part of grocery shopping.

#### PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media language

##### Historical context

The icons of the *Quality Street* brand were two characters from the Regency era of British history. In the Regency era, Britain went through a period of elegance with regard to Fine Art and Architecture. The Regency era could also be compared to the 1950s for its significant social and cultural development. Between 1811 and 1837 the country was under the rule of Prince Regent and developments in technology (e.g. the steam-powered printing press), fashion and architecture were mirrored by a population boom. These similarities can be compared to England in the 1950s.

##### Social and cultural context

The 1950s saw a change in “high culture”, a time where fine art, decadence and theatre that had previously only been accessed by the upper classes

and those with money were now going to be made more affordable to the mass audience. The Conservative Party’s 1951 election campaign was spearheaded by the slogan “Set the People Free”, and this supported drastic change as entertainment and arts became more accessible and affordable.

#### Consider how media language creates and communicates meaning:

- **Structure and design of the advert:**
  - »» anchorage of the gold frame – connotations of a halo effect around the man and the product
  - »» typical triangular geometric **composition** of the poster to help secondary anchorage of the product
  - »» product takes central **framing**.
- **Typography** is strong, forming the bottom third of the poster, and the strong purple colour stands out to draw the consumers’ eyes to the name.
- Hand-drawn, artistic nature of the design, with a rich **colour palette** of primary and secondary colours, links to the post-war consumerist culture.
- **Persuasive language techniques** such as alliteration, emotive language and superlatives are all indicative of a well-read educated audience; further enhanced by the bold, serif font styles connoting richness.

#### Consider how media language creates narratives:

- **Connotations** of the female characters being dressed similarly to the sweets that are shown close-up on the bottom third of the poster.
- Inference of a **dilemma** can be investigated at two levels:
  - »» male ‘hero’ choosing between two ‘damsels in distress’ (Propp’s theory)
  - »» females choosing the chocolate (see Representation section for discussion on female stereotyping).
- **Costume** and dress of male character indicating



the formal nature of his dilemma; connotations of a higher class and richer society.

- **Patriarchal** narrative, which is part of a range of similar adverts of this time.

## Consider intertextuality:

- The characters in the gold frame, Miss Sweetly and Major Quality, are part of the **brand Identity** of the product since 1936.
- The characters are symbolic of the Regency era of British history referenced by the dress codes of the characters in the gold-framed picture at the back of the advert.

## Possible areas for further investigation:

- The advert is part of a **campaign** from this time that uses a similar design. The brand identity of Major Quality and Miss Sweetly goes back to the origin of the product in the 1930s, so it is interesting to look at how their advertising has developed with these characters:  
[http://www.nestle.com/media/newsandfeatures/quality\\_street\\_75](http://www.nestle.com/media/newsandfeatures/quality_street_75)

## PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Representation



## Social and cultural context

Gender roles in the 1950s were remarkably different to the present day and it is important to consider the advertisement in this context.

The product itself was designed and planned for working families and the imagery is very aspirational of a higher class which links to the post-war era in Britain. Much of the branding indicates that the product was symbolic of elegance and

aspiration. The two female characters appear to be of a lower class than the man in the suit, and the man in the suit is of a lower class than the two characters in the gold frame. The item that brings all these classes together is the product in the centre of the image.

## Consider the representation of gender:

- The image suggests a **male dominated society** with regards to 'choice' – he is in control of the product and is centrally framed. This links to Mulvey's male gaze in relation to the framing (**feminist theoretical perspective**). The male character anchors the audience's eyes to the product which has significant phallic symbolism.
- The dress code relates to the modern working businessman who may be the 'provider' of the brand.
- The women have two **stereotypes** being relied upon in the advert: firstly, that of their need for chocolate, a common and very traditional stereotype that still exists today, and secondly their subservient body language to the dominant man. The implication is that to be successful you will need to be romantically led by a man.
- There is also a secondary and **deeper analysis** here – a sense of manipulation with the women distracting the man through romance to access the 'prize' that is the product in the gentleman's lap. This advert could be seen to be representative of the way in which society was moving at this time.
- The **historical** representations of the Regency characters show typical strong feminine colours, and the showing of flesh for Miss Sweetly, and the formal uniform dress of Major Quality signify importance and power in their own relationship.

## Consider the representation of age:

- To discuss the representation of age, it would be important to make a comparison to a similar advert in this campaign with a much older couple in two chairs (see above).
- This advert is purposely for the young to middle aged adults (25–40), and the **target audience** could see themselves in the characters in the main section of the advert.

## Possible areas for further investigation:

- Consider the **role of women** in advertising which is key to this discussion.
- Use some **examples of advertising from the early 1950s** to help understand the role of the housewife and how they would provide

## Media Studies – Set Product Factsheet

for the main of the movie. The thing is even show subservient women with their eyes not providing an address to the audience.



"Anyway, you didn't burn the Schlitz!"

There's hope for any young bride who knows her man well enough to serve him Schlitz Beer. For what man (or woman) can resist the taste of Schlitz Beer... a taste millions prefer to the taste of any other beer. No, we're not just saying that. Here's the simple proof:

Schlitz tastes so good to so many people, it's first in sales in the U.S.A.

RADIO HEADLINES: "The Wife of Jay", with the Ronald Colman, Wednesday, NBC.  
TELEVISION HIT: "Schlitz Playhouse of Stars", Friday, CBS-TV.

**Schlitz**

The Beer that made Milwaukee Famous

© 1952, JOE SCHLITZ BREWING CO., MILWAUKEE, WIS.

4.

**SO THE HARDER A WIFE WORKS, THE CUTER SHE LOOKS!**

GOOD, HONEY, YOU SEEM TO THRIVE ON COOKING, CLEANING AND DUSTING AND I'M ALL TICKERED OUT BY CLOSING TIME. WHAT'S THE ANSWER?

VITAMINS, DARLINGS! I ALWAYS GET MY VITAMINS

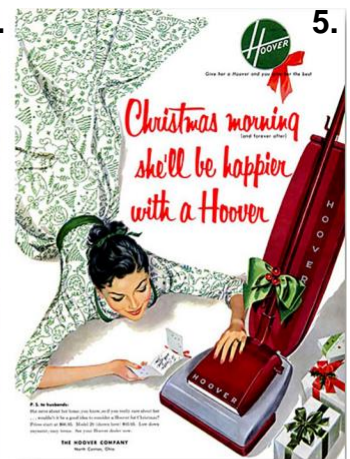
REMEMBER WHAT THE DOCTOR TOLD YOU - YOU CAN'T HAVE PEP WITHOUT VITAMINS! WELL, I'VE DISCOVERED SOMETHING - A PERFECTLY DELICIOUS BREAKFAST CEREAL CALLED **PEP**. THAT'S RICH IN VITAMINS B AND D, AND I'VE ALREADY LAD IN A SUPPLY FOR OUR BREAKFASTS

HONEY, IF VITAMINS CAN GIVE ME EVEN A LITTLE OF YOUR ZIP AND SPARKLE, YOU'VE MADE THE DISCOVERY OF THE AGE!

IF YOU, TOO, HAVE LACKED VITAMINS, DISCOVER THE GRAND THINGS THEY CAN DO FOR YOU. AND TO HELP GET YOUR VITAMINS, EAT **KELLOGG'S PEP** FOR BREAKFAST. IT'S A SUPREME DELICIOUS CEREAL - CRUNCHY GOLDEN FLAKES OF BROWN AND OTHER PARTS OF WHEAT, ENRICHED WITH VITAMINS B AND D. EAT IT EVERY DAY AND SEE IF YOU DON'T HAVE MORE ZIP AND ZEST!

**Vitamins for pep! PEP for vitamins!**

\*Pep contains vitamins B and D. Each ounce contains 1/5 of an adult's and 4/5 of a child's daily requirement of B, and about 1/2 the daily requirement of D. Copyright 1950, Kellogg Company



### Acknowledgements:

1. Image Courtesy of The Advertising Archives
2. Neil Baylis / Alamy Stock Photo
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4. Image Courtesy of The Advertising Archives
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# This Girl Can advert (2016)



# This Girl Can advert

## (2016)

### Component 1: Exploring the Media

#### Focus areas: Media Language Representation Media Contexts

#### BACKGROUND CONTEXT

- *This Girl Can* is a national campaign developed by Sport England and in conjunction with a wide range of partnership organisations.
- The purpose of the campaign is to break down the primary barrier holding women back from participating in sport – the fear of judgement. The campaign seeks to target and celebrate ‘active women who are doing their thing, whatever that may be, no matter how well they do it, no matter how they look or even how red their face gets’.
- The campaign is currently funded by the National Lottery and backed by a government body, Sport England; there is no commercial aspect to it at all.

#### PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media language

##### Social and Cultural Contexts:

- **Sport England** carried out a lot of research to figure out why there was such a big gender gap in **sports participation**. They discovered that two million fewer 14-40 year old women than men partake in sport regularly and they wanted to understand why.
- They discovered that:
  - »» 13 million women said they would like to participate more in sport and physical activity.
  - »» Just over 6 million of these are not currently active at all.
  - »» Fear of being judged was the number one barrier for most women who felt they were unable to participate in physical activity.
- **As a result of the campaign, 1.6m women have started exercising** and the number of women playing sport and being active is increasing faster than the number of men.
- Soon after the launch of the “This Girl Can” campaign, **Nike** released a more motivational campaign called “**Better for it**” which also portrayed a more ‘real’ side to fitness.

#### Consider the codes and conventions of media language and how media language influences meaning:

- A **central, striking, image** that encourages the reader to become intrigued to find out more about the **advert**:
  - »» **A mid-shot of a woman in her thirties, exercising.** Unlike many advertising campaigns, this female is **not a celebrity**. By purposefully avoiding using a sporting legend or an athletic goddess, the campaign is able to **target ordinary women of all ages**, encouraging them to take part in sport and showing them that they can achieve.
  - »» The lack of celebrity means that the woman in the advert feels **familiar**. The female in the image has her hair scraped up into a ponytail, she is sweating a lot and her clothes are not what society would consider fashionable. For all these reasons, there is a sense that you know someone like her or, in fact, you are her.
- The **dominance of this image** suggests she is the **protagonist of this narrative**, the ‘hero’ according to Vladimir Propp’s character theory. She is heroic because she is embracing sport; she doesn’t appear to care what anyone thinks and has shed any inhibitions. She is an inspiration to other women as it is obvious from her facial expression that she is really enjoying herself and is completely lost in the moment.
- Across the image is what the **campaign** itself calls a **mantra**, “Sweating like a pig, feeling like a fox.” The campaign has taken a derogatory comment, “sweating like a pig” and turned it into something more positive.
  - »» **Historically** it was considered un-ladylike to break into a sweat and, for many women, it is still the case. They don’t want to be seen sweating as it makes them red in the face, ruins their make-up and makes them feel unattractive. However, this mantra turns



this on its head and perhaps suggests that by working out, you are becoming healthier and therefore will become more attractive, “like a fox” - a fox being a young, beautiful lady.

- Towards the bottom but still central is the name of the **campaign, or brand logo**, “**This Girl Can**”. This is a very positive statement with **connotations** of determination. It is used to reinforce the idea that all women should exercise and also to convince them that if they try they can succeed in sport.
- If you were unaware of this campaign, the limited text and unusual image would act like an **enigma code** (Roland Barthes) for the audience, as we want to find out who this character is and what the advert means by, “This Girl Can”.
- In the top left hand corner of the advert, there is the **hashtag** “**#thisgirlcan**” connecting readers to the campaign’s social media pages, should they wish to follow it or find out more, and there are logos for the **producers** of the campaign – Sport England and the Lottery. These are much smaller and tucked away so as not to detract from the visuals. Use of the hashtag will hopefully connect women with like-minded others and bring a sense of **social cohesion**. It also allows the print campaign to take readers to the complete YouTube advert, allowing them to understand the campaign and see more positive representations of women enjoying sport.

like the others in this campaign, has a certain ‘rawness’ to it, focusing on ‘**real**’ women. There is no glossy finish and it doesn’t resemble any of the high-end adverts produced by commercial sporting brands.

- »» The females are supposed to be seen as heroic - **aspirational role models** for the readers. Audience members should see something of themselves in these women, bringing their own fear of judgement to the forefront and considering whether it is actually an appropriate fear to have when they see the amount of fun and enjoyment these women seem to be experiencing.
- In addition, the **brand name**, “This Girl Can” uses the noun “**girl**” as an all-encompassing term. It is used to represent (and target) **the whole of the female population** and make them feel **included**, a force to be reckoned with, a team, a united front.
- When used in the context of sport, “**girl**” can be thought of as having some negative connotations – “throw like a girl” is a common simile used to mock someone who cannot throw. It plays on the **stereotype that girls can’t do sport**. Perhaps then this statement is in response to that idea, “This Girl Can”.
- Interestingly though, considering that the campaign is targeting females of all ages, the word “girl” has been used rather than “woman”. “Girl” is usually associated with younger females and there is an argument to say that women over a certain age may feel disconnected from this campaign.

## PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Representation

Consider the social and cultural significance of representations of femininity:

- The campaign’s agenda is to encourage women to participate in physical activities by **challenging the dominant ideology**. In order to do this, the campaign portrays women extremely positively.
- **Stereotypically**, women have often been thought of as the weaker sex and often less successful, particularly where sport is concerned. However, this advertising campaign is seeking to **challenge these stereotypes** and convince women of their potential. The female in this image is portrayed from a positive viewpoint: she is represented as independent, confident and happy. There is a clear focus on her face, showing an expression of enjoyment and fun. By **selecting** such an image, the **producers are seeking to challenge the sexism** and male dominance in sport.
- The **processes of selection and production** have been carefully managed. This advert,

# The Man with The Golden Gun film poster (December 1974)



# The Man with The Golden Gun film poster

## (December 1974)

### Component 1: Exploring the Media

**Focus areas:**  
**Media language**  
**Representation**  
**Media contexts**

#### PRODUCT CONTEXT

- *The Man with the Golden Gun* is a James Bond film released on 19 December 1974, starring Roger Moore as 007. This was only Moore's second appearance as the fictional MI6 agent.
- Based on a book of the same name, written by Ian Fleming, the film was produced by the British company Eon (Everything or Nothing) Productions and distributed by United Artists. The film was created with an estimated \$7 million budget and grossed over \$97 million at the world wide box office.
- To reflect the popularity of the Martial Arts film genre, with the rise of stars such as Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan, there were several Kung Fu scenes and the film was filmed predominantly in Asia, having being shot in Hong Kong, Thailand and Macau.
- The artwork for poster itself was produced by artist and illustrator Robert McGinnis.

#### PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media language

##### Historical Context:

Prior to the 1990s, illustrations were much more commonly used on film posters due to the limited **technology** that was available.

The film was set in the middle of the 1973 energy crisis, when the oil producing Arab nations proclaimed an oil embargo causing an oil crisis which had both short and long-term effects across on **politics and the economy** across the globe. This is hinted at through the poster's

iconography of the power plant in the lower left corner and the energy beam directed at Bond.

**Consider the codes and conventions of media language and how elements of media language influence meaning:**

- Typically, film posters are very **visual** and rely on **images** and limited text to promote the film. The images need to give the audience an idea of the film **genre** and hint at the **narrative** – here, rather than just one dominant image, there is so much going on that the reader is expected to work through the images to understand the film's plot.
- The **central image** is a **mid-shot** of James Bond, smartly dressed holding a gun across his body. The dominance of his image suggests he is the film's **protagonist** and so probably a 'good guy'. According to Vladimir **Propp's** theory, he would be considered the '**hero**'.
- Bond's **attire** connotes business and professionalism and the gun, an iconic part of Bond's 'uniform', **signifies** danger and action.
- Bond is **looking directly at the audience**, seemingly making eye contact. The intensity of his stare and the lack of a smile could **connote** how seriously he expects to be taken and that he appears calm despite the chaos surrounding him. This informs the audience of one of his great strengths, his ability to keep his composure in any situation.
- A common convention for film posters is to have the **actor's name(s)** placed prominently as another way to entice the **audience**. Roger Moore had become a household name after starring in the well-known TV series *The Saint* and playing Bond in the previous film, *Live and Let Die*, so his name is placed directly above Bond's image to reinforce the link.
- The **title** of the film appears with the name of the author who wrote the books (on which the films are based) at the bottom of the poster. The



**credit block**, detailing **industry information** such as other star's names, directors and producers, is much smaller and tucked away so as not to divert the audience away from the main image or the rest of the poster.

## Consider narrative:

- At the bottom of the frame, in the foreground, is an extreme close up of a golden gun. It is pointed right at Bond and someone is loading it with a bullet engraved with his name so the reader can interpret this as an attempted assassination on the protagonist.
  - »» The **colour** of the gun **connotes** wealth and status and the fact we can only see the hand of the shooter creates intrigue and what Roland Barthes would term an **enigma** code for the audience, as we want to find out who is trying to kill Bond.
  - »» Also, continuing **Propp's** character theory, we would consider this person to be the '**villain**'.
- Surrounding Bond are even more enemies and people trying to kill him. These images, combined with the images of destruction and explosions, are **codes that signify** to the audience this is from the action/thriller **genre**.
- As is **typical** of Bond films, the protagonist is flanked by **females** wearing very few clothes:
  - »» Two of these women are highly **sexualised**: bikini-clad, slim with perfect hour glass figure and long flowing hair.
  - »» **Body language**: one appears to be looking at the golden gun assassin whilst pointing at Bond whilst the other seems to be putting her arm out in front of him, seemingly protecting him. Barthes might argue that this is another enigma code, suggesting to the audience that Bond has female allies and enemies, yet all look the same making it hard for him to distinguish between them.

## PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Representation

### Social and Cultural Contexts:

At the start of the 20th century, many film depictions of minority ethnic groups supported the dominant **stereotypes** of the time: to be pitied, to be laughed at, the exotic and/or dangerous. While society was progressing towards racial equality by the 1970s, some of these stereotypes were still in evidence in mainstream films. In addition, it is interesting to consider this poster in the context of the move towards gender equality and

increased women's rights in the 1960s and 70s.

### Consider the representation of gender and ethnicity:

- At this time, Bond was already **iconic**. He was the nation's favourite secret agent; charming, suave, good looking and, most importantly, always caught the 'bad guys'. This **representation of masculinity** told audiences that this was what a man had to be at the time – intelligent, strong and prepared to put yourself in dangerous situations. If you were all of those things, you would be successful, gain respect and women would want you. The assumption then is that men should also be heterosexual.
- Two of the three **females** on the poster are wearing bikinis which show off their slim bodies. Both are heavily made up and wear earrings and bracelets as accessories to the 'outfit'. The two women also have long flowing hair.
  - »» A feminist theoretical perspective would argue that this **sexualised representation** of women suggests that they are little more than bodies to be looked at.
- Another female, however, is dressed in a karate uniform and is shown in a martial arts pose, and appears to go against this **stereotype**. She too has flowing hair but this time it is much darker and her skin tone suggests she is from a different ethnic group to the other females. This goes some way to explaining why she seems not to support the dominant sexualised stereotype portrayed by the other females; she is seen as exotic, different, the 'other'.

### Consider the representation of issues and events:

- Interestingly, one of the main themes in this Bond film was an actual world event – the 1937 **global energy crisis**. With the embargo on oil, countries were considering alternative power sources and this is portrayed through the **iconography** of the power plant and the related explosions. By including this theme, the producers are encouraging audiences to consider what might happen if oil really did run out and predict what the outcomes would be for society.

### Possible areas for further investigation:

- Consider ideas about **encoding** and **decoding** texts (could reference theorists e.g. Stuart Hall). The producers have encoded certain ideas into this text but it depends on the viewer's own social and cultural context how this image is decoded:
  - »» **For example**, the depiction of a female

doing martial arts could be seen to support the idea that she is dangerous and to be feared or could be seen as a progressive way of looking at females, those who are strong, confident and fearless.

- **Feminist theoretical perspectives** - Laura Mulvey (in her 1975 essay 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema') coined the term the '**male gaze**' which discussed how the audience is put into the perspective of a heterosexual man. In this poster, the audience is forced to **focus** on the curves of the women's bodies, putting them in the eyes of a male.
  - »» Mulvey goes on to argue then that this denies the women human identity and relegates them to the status of **objects** to be admired for physical appearance. This could be further argued as the producer of the artwork was a male, Robert McGinnis.

# No Time to Die

(2021)



Image from [UKPosters.co.uk](http://UKPosters.co.uk)

## GCSE Component 1: Exploring the media

### Focus areas:

- **Media language (Section A)**
- **Representation (Section A)**
- **Media industries (Section B)**
- **Media contexts (Section A & B)**

## THE PRODUCT

- *No Time to Die* is a James Bond film that was released in the UK on 30 September 2021, after a global premiere at the Royal Albert Hall on 28 September 2021. Starring Daniel Craig as 007, this is his fifth and final performance as the fictional MI6 agent. The release was significantly delayed from April 2020, following a change in director and the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The film was produced by the British company EON (Everything or Nothing) Productions and distributed in UK cinemas by Universal Pictures. *No Time to Die* is available to stream on Amazon Prime.
- The film's budget was an estimated \$250-301 million, making it the most expensive Bond film to date. So far it has grossed over \$774 million worldwide at the box office.
- The poster was designed by Empire Designs, a British film promotion agency. The first teaser poster for the film was released on James Bond Day, 5th October 2019, as part of a global marketing campaign for the film. The typographical logo of the film title, *No Time to Die*, is in Futura Black.
- Propp's theory, he would be considered the 'hero'.
- This is reinforced by the action shots of him on a bike and in a car, which connote he is on a quest.
- Guns are commonly used as props in the action/thriller genre therefore audiences can expect violence, action, and danger. Each gun is casually pointed, connoting that the figures are alert and ready for action.
- Nomi is wearing a military costume with an earpiece, which connotes her role as an active agent. Like Bond, as a 00 agent, she is a trained assassin. Her calm and focused facial expression connotes that she is in control. This reflects the shift in the Bond narrative towards more contemporary depictions of women. However, Paloma's (Ana De Armas) costume is a glamorous, revealing, navy-blue evening dress cut to her waist. This type of dress would be historically more typical of how 'Bond Girls' have been depicted by the franchise.
- Safin (Rami Malek), Q (Ben Whishaw) and Swann are looking directly at the audience, seemingly making eye contact. This is a common convention in film posters and helps give a more personal approach to this format.
- A common convention for film posters is to have the names of the actors placed in quite a prominent position as another way to entice the audience, but this poster does not do that. This may be because the producers are confident that the audiences will recognise Daniel Craig and any text may detract from the visuals.
- This poster uses plenty of visual 'star appeal', as Lashana Lynch would also be recognisable to fans of the Marvel Cinematic Universe given her role in *Captain Marvel* (2019).
- The large iconic 007 logo at the top of the poster is eye-catching and bold. The choice of a worn, aged, blue tone for the typography hints at the content of the film, which shows a more experienced Bond. The colour also creates a sense of cohesion with the blue tones of the El Nido bar, the villain's suit, and the glamorous dress of CIA agent (Paloma).

## PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media language

### Consider the codes and conventions of media language and how elements of media language influence meaning:

- The dominant image is a mid-shot of James Bond, smartly dressed. This suggests that he is the film's protagonist. According to Vladimir



- Towards the bottom of the poster, the title of the film appears along with another smaller 007 logo. The gold font for 007 represents luxury, wealth, aspiration, and exclusivity—all traits that are associated with the Bond franchise. The capitalised title suggests power and strength.
- The title *No Time to Die* can be read in several ways – either that Bond could be so active that he doesn't even have the time to die, suggesting that the film will be fast paced and exciting, or it could be read as a bad time to die, suggesting a more sombre tone to the film. It also suggests there are going to be some significant deaths in the narrative.
- Beneath the title are more typical conventions of film posters – release date, social media, production companies and distributors. The latter are much smaller so as not to divert the audience's attention away from the main image or the rest of the poster.

### Intertextuality:

- The montage design, where separate images are laid over each other, references previous Bond films, providing a sense of familiarity, nostalgia and pleasure to fans who recognise the link. The 007 gun logo acts as an intertextual link between *No Time to Die* and previous Bond films. It has become synonymous with Bond.
- It is significant that there is no intertextual reference to Ian Fleming (the author of the James Bond books) on this poster – this is a departure from previous Bond films, signifying *No Time to Die* is not based on one of his original books.

### Narrative:

- The exotic locations that we expect for a Hollywood spy thriller and Bond film are shown in the background shots. Italy and Cuba are contrasted by using warm daylight and cold neon lights at night for Bar El Nido. This opposition echoes other oppositions in the poster, making for a more cohesive design.
- There is an image of a man wearing a mask and carrying a gun – this character would be Propp's 'villain'. There are connotations of

death and danger here. The mask is covering up his identity, suggesting that he wishes to remain hidden. This acts as an enigma code for the audience (Roland Barthes) as we want to find out who this character is and his role in the plot.

- The denotation of the motorbike and Aston Martin suggests that there will be action sequences and excitement within the narrative, both of which are conventions of action films.

## PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Contexts and representations

### Social and cultural context:

- James Bond is an action hero who, since the 1960s, has been constructed to embody historical masculine stereotypes such as strength, skill, independence, etc.
- The representation of women in the franchise has also historically been stereotypical: 'Bond Girls', who are the beautiful 'love interest' for Bond, are often insignificant to the narrative and ultimately disposable (Propp's 'princess').
- The representation of gender in the Bond franchise has evolved over time, to an extent, in a bid to reflect the changing social context. It would be useful to consider the poster for *The Man with The Golden Gun* (1974) here.
- Craig's Bond is not as sexist and overtly stereotypical as the earlier incarnations of the character and reflects some contemporary notions of masculinity as his Bond is older, more thoughtful and shows signs of vulnerability. The poster, however, needing to communicate the genre and franchise quickly, only lightly reflects some of these character developments and continues to represent Bond as the familiar action hero.
- Hollywood's representation of race and ethnicity has shifted significantly over the decades. Mainstream audience expectations have changed because of numerous events and individuals. Two of the most significant events to prompt audiences to question what they are seeing in Hollywood was the #OscarsSoWhite campaign in 2016, and the killing of a black, American

man, George Floyd, by the police force in 2020. The latter ignited a wave of US and global protests, which challenged long-established symbols of racism (e.g. flags, statues, buildings), calling on corporations and institutions to change.

- Aston Martin has a longstanding brand relationship with the James Bond franchise. In *No Time to Die* several different models appear, but on the poster, Bond can be seen in a DB5. This model was the first ever Aston Martin used in the films, when Sean Connery drove it in *Goldfinger* in 1964.
- Dr Madeleine Swann (Léa Seydoux) is pictured twice on the poster. A French psychiatrist and one of Bond's love interests, she would be recognisable to fans, as she also appeared in *Spectre* (2015).
- James Bond has retired to Jamaica in *No Time to Die*, and his 007 title is reassigned to a new MI6 agent, Nomi (Lashana Lynch). This was widely reported before the launch of the film and the announcement of a black, female 007 led to a minority of racists trolling the actor Lashana Lynch online. On being cast, Lynch stated "We [Black women] know how it feels to be mis- and underrepresented and we know how it feels to yearn for someone, anyone in the world to speak our truth for us when we feel like we don't have a voice. And I'm hoping that my career and my choice in roles and me just being me, authentically, is shining a light on our power." (<https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/movies/story/2021-08-26/no-time-to-die-lashana-lynch>)
- There are three gun props used in the poster. The Advertising Standards Agency (ASA) states that "ads for computer games, films, TV programmes, should ensure that they do not promote violence or anti-social behaviour by depicting weapons in a threatening context or in a manner that could be seen to be glamorising violence". (<https://bit.ly/3l0Ga7W>). Therefore it is significant that each of these weapons are relatively small or partially seen, and are not actively being used.

## Representations of gender

- Bond is pictured three times in the poster and in all instances, he provides an image of masculinity that connotes skill, intelligence, and strength. In the larger image, although facing side on, Bond's posture is strong, relaxed, and dominant, acting as a frame for the rest of the characters. His facial expression is thoughtful and care-worn, reflecting more contemporary ideas of masculinity. In the smaller images, he is represented as calm, skilled and determined while driving at speed – all traits that we would expect in a hero and a spy. Interestingly, he is not represented with a weapon, which is unconventional for masculine representations in spy thrillers.
- The second most dominant character on the poster is also a male – Rami Malek as Lyutsifer Safin. His size in the poster could reflect the male-dominated nature of the franchise – the main protagonist and antagonist who drive the narrative are both male.
- The use of key light and make-up on all three women on the poster represents them as beautiful, which is what we would expect for a Hollywood blockbuster. Two women on the poster are given agency through their use of weapons – the guns suggest danger, but their posture connotes confidence with a relaxed attitude toward such dangers. Arguably, Nomi and Swann are more than the 'Bond Girls' of the past within the film. Nomi's military costume and earpiece suggest her actions are central to the plot, and her presence is not merely for the development of the male characters. Each woman is independent and not shown as a 'damsel in distress' or 'Proppian princess', reflecting the shift in Hollywood to represent women more equally to meet the expectations of a modern mainstream audience.

## Consider representations of ethnicity and race

- The cast is predominantly white, which is typical of both Hollywood movies and the Bond franchise. Lashana Lynch as Nomi is British Jamaican and is represented as skilled and determined by using the military costume,

earpiece, and gun. Very few people of colour have been represented on Bond posters in the past and the majority have been cast as villains or ‘Bond Girls’, therefore a black woman taking on the role of 007 is a significant piece of Hollywood and franchise history. Representations of Grace Jones, Gloria Hendry, Halle Berry and Naomie Harris on previous theatrical release posters could provide some good exploratory talk/activities.

- Safin, the centrally pictured villain, is played by Rami Malek, an American actor of Egyptian heritage. Bond villains typically stand in opposition to Bond, and not just morally, as this often extends to ethnicity too.
- There is a villain pictured in a parka jacket wearing a Japanese Noh mask, which are often used for ghostly or demonic characters in Japanese theatre.

### Consider representations of age

- The use of light on Bond’s main image highlights his older age, constructing a representation of wisdom and experience. Most of the characters are represented as youthful, in contrast to Bond, and as a result less experienced and skilled.

### Possible areas for further investigation:

- Ben Whishaw’s Q and the representation of stereotypical ‘geeks’ or LGBTQIA+ characters.
- Safin is represented as having facial scarring with disfigurement makeup conforming to the historical (and widely criticised) Hollywood stereotype of villains having some form of physical difference.

## PART 3: STARTING POINTS – Industry

### Historical and cultural context

- Hollywood is the oldest film industry in the world, originating in the 1890s. The first motion pictures were less than a minute long, due to the limitations of technology, and sound was not introduced into films until 1927. Hollywood is considered the ‘film factory’ of the world and exports its products to most countries. The first Bond film was released in 1962.

### Consider the nature of media production, by large organisations who own the products they produce, and by individuals and groups:

- Film production consists of five major stages: development, pre-production, production, post-production, and distribution.
  - Development – This is when the ideas are created, if necessary, the rights are bought, the screenplay is written and financing is sought from producers, partner studios and (for big budget productions) product placement relationships.
  - Pre-production – During this stage cast and film crew are found, locations are chosen, and sets are built.
  - Production – This is when the film is shot.
  - Post-production – This stage is when the film is edited. The crew work on the sound, images, and visual effects.
  - Distribution – This is when the finished film is distributed. The film is marketed and promoted. Big budget Hollywood films are screened at the cinema and released for home viewing.
- While the poster above is set for Section A, and does not need to be analysed textually for Section B, it can be used as a starting point for exploring industry issues:
  - Company names: universal, United Artists Releasing, MGM, EON can be researched in terms of production and distribution, ownership issues, including conglomerates.
  - Actors – exploration of previous roles, ‘star’ appeal.
  - Hashtag, website – role of new technology and social media in marketing film products.

### Other areas to research:

- Director, writers, other crew e.g. DOP, Costume Designer – exploration of these roles and their position in the production process.
- IMAX – the role of technology in the distribution of products.

- Soundtrack by Billie Eilish on Interscope (owned by Universal) – ‘star appeal’, synergy and convergence of different platforms to promote the film.
- Synergy with other brands (e.g. Nokia, Triumph, Omega) to fund production and/or market the film.

**Consider the effect of ownership and the control of media organisations, including conglomerate ownership, diversification, and vertical integration:**

- The James Bond series is produced by EON productions, a British film production company based in London. It is the first Bond film to be distributed by Universal Pictures, which acquired the international distribution rights following the expiration of Sony Pictures’ contract after the release of *Spectre* in 2015. Universal also holds the worldwide rights for physical home media (DVD/Blu-Ray). United Artists Releasing (owned by MGM) holds the rights for North America, as well as worldwide digital and television rights. Amazon bought MGM in 2022 and with it the rights to stream the whole James Bond catalogue on Amazon Prime, a video on demand subscription service.
- Bond has always been well known for its exotic locations across the globe and *No Time to Die* was no exception, using locations in Italy, Jamaica, Norway, and the Faroe Islands. Pinewood studios in London was also used for the scene which needed big sets.

**Consider the functions and types of regulation of the media:**

- Film and video releases in Britain are amongst the most tightly regulated in the Western world.
- Age restrictions are placed on all commercially released films by the BBFC and some are even expected to make cuts or alter the film in some way to conform to the guidelines.
- To secure a wide audience, *No Time to Die* had a 12A UK rating for its cinematic release and 12 for its physical media and VOD/streaming release.

**Consider how the media operate as commercial industries on a global scale and reach both large and specialised audiences:**

- The long-running Bond franchise has an established fan-base and *No Time to Die*, a US/UK co-production, received global distribution (theatrically, on DVD/Blu-ray and VOD/streaming) to reach a mass audience.
- *No Time to Die* is clearly intended for mainstream audiences and has great commercial appeal:
  - Bond as a character is iconic and has universal appeal – he is skilled, charming, good looking and, arguably, in Craig’s version of the character he has more depth.
  - The narratives of the films provide familiarity and comfort (‘bad guy’ does something wrong, ‘good guy’ catches him and wins the day) which reinforces dominant messages and values about ‘good’ and ‘bad’, ‘duty’ and ‘loyalty’.
- *No Time to Die* can be seen as making an active effort to appeal to a contemporary audience that is less likely to tolerate the flimsy gender and racial stereotypes of past Bond films. Producers hired Phoebe Waller-Bridge, only the second ever female scriptwriter to work on a Bond film, to develop the female characters and make their dialogue and characterisation more convincing. However, the specialised audience of core Bond fans are still reached using nostalgia and typical narrative conventions.



# Pride magazine

(November, 2015)



# Pride magazine

(November, 2015)

## Component 1: Exploring the Media

**Focus areas:**  
**Media language**  
**Representation**  
**Media contexts**

### PRODUCT CONTEXT

- *Pride* is a UK monthly women's lifestyle magazine that targets women of colour.
- It has been in publication since 1990 and has a circulation of over 300 000 copies per month and a readership of over 146 000.
- *Pride* is distributed in the UK by COMAG, part of Condé Nast.
- It's easy to see how people may mistake *Pride* for a gay magazine, as this word has become synonymous with the gay community over recent decades. In fact, the modern gay movement has its roots in the black liberation movement of the 1960s with Gay Pride borrowing its name from Black Pride.

### PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media language

#### Social and cultural context

In the 1950s and 60s, women's magazines moved away from articles on homemaking and moved towards articles on beauty. Fashion also moved up the agenda, with less about how to make it and more about how to wear it. So, with consumption at the top of the agenda, readers were being reminded that they should look and feel the best they could and the best way to achieve this was by purchasing the latest cosmetics and hair care advertised within the magazine's pages. This is still very much the case today and is evident in this magazine.

The 'Uses and Gratifications Model' suggests that audiences interact with texts for different reasons: information, personal identity, social interaction and entertainment. Although all of these reasons could be argued for why *Pride* has such high readership figures, arguably the personal identity aspect is

probably the main one. In fact, its unique selling point is that it is the only black media company that still remains in black British ownership.

#### Consider how media language creates and communicates meaning:

- **Title** of the magazine, *Pride*, has connotations of self-respect, self-esteem, dignity and strength. There is a subtext of resistance and an affirmation of cultural identity.
- Some of the **masthead** is lost behind the cover star's head, suggesting her dominance and showing how confident the magazine is that their readers will still recognise their brand, despite not being able to see all of the title.
- The **strapline** tells us that the magazine is "celebrating 24 years at the top!". At the top of what, we're not entirely sure, but the phrasing encourages the reader to feel a part of something great. The assumption is that they are reading one of the best magazines of its kind.
- The red and black **colour palette** used for the cover lines helps to support the idea of pride. Red is associated with pride and strength and the black is a strong, bold statement, perhaps representative of their target audience, women of colour.
- The **pose** used by the **cover star**, Harris, with her hand on her hip suggests confidence and sass. It's also a photographer's trick to lengthen the appearance of the torso, helping to make her look taller and slimmer, trying to add to her beauty and further improve her body shape making her figure aspirational to the target audience.
- Harris is **looking directly** at the audience, seemingly making eye contact. This is a common convention of magazines and helps to add to the more personal approach of this format.

#### Consider how media language portrays aspects of reality, constructs points of view and conveys messages and values:

- Many of the cover lines focus on **body image** reminding readers that they could and should look better, and also that they

will be judged on their appearance.

- One **cover line** references Female Genital Mutilation but uses only its acronym (FGM). There's an assumption then that the reader will understand this and so have a certain level of social and cultural understanding of the practice. It's a controversial topic, illustrating how the magazine is comfortable covering such serious topics through investigative journalism and sees their target audience as mature enough to handle the subject matter, and educated enough to engage with it.
- **Harris' cover line**, "Bond And Beyond", suggests that her role as Eve Money Penny in the Bond film was a defining role for her, and her career has continued to improve ever since. However, it's argued that her defining role was in fact Tia Dalma in *Pirates of the Caribbean*. Perhaps though, this image of her as a voodoo witch doesn't fit with the mainstream ideals of feminine beauty. Whereas Bond females have certain attributes associated with them – those of beauty, femininity and overt sexuality.

## Possible areas for further investigation:

- **Genre codes and conventions** of magazine covers: layout, use of cover star, house style, mastheads. Genre conventions of magazines, their ever-changing nature and **hybridity**. For example, lifestyle magazines could be specifically about cookery, fashion or health and fitness and still come under the umbrella term 'lifestyle'.
- **Narrative** – cover lines on the front cover tease people to want to read certain stories within the magazine (could be linked to Roland Barthes – enigma codes).
- The **function** of magazines – linked to media language and cultural context – "to provide readers with a sense of community, comfort, and pride in this mythic feminine identity" ('Media Semiotics', Bignell, 1997, p61). Magazines promote a "feminine culture" and therefore "define and shape the woman's world" ('Feminism and Youth Culture', McRobbie, 2000, p69), so they become a familiar friend for the female filled with advice, entertainment and provide a form of escapism for the reader.

## PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Representation

### Social and cultural context

**Black Lives Matter (BLM)** is an international

activist movement which originated in the African American community. It campaigns against violence and systematic racism towards black people. The movement started in 2013, with the spread of the hashtag #blacklivesmatter after the controversial acquittal of George Zimmerman in the shooting of Trayvon Martin. It then became nationally recognized through social media and street demonstrations following two more black deaths in 2014. The dominance of this movement on social media may possibly have something to do with the huge number of twitter followers and Facebook likes *Pride* magazine now has. According to their website, they have 300% more followers and likes than any other title in the ethnic market – (<http://pridemagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Pride-MediaPack2015.pdf>)

### Historical and political context

Around the time of The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, Black Pride was a response to dominant white cultures and ideologies that encouraged black people to celebrate black culture and embrace their African heritage. At this time, the Afro hairstyle, which was associated with everything natural, came to symbolise Black Pride and Power, in contrast with the artificial hairstyles of those wearing wigs or having relaxed hair, both of which were seen as pandering to European notions of beauty. Interestingly then, this text has a cover line which references "The wig revolution" and Harris herself has straight hair rather than her natural curls. Could this have something to do with the consumerist context of the magazine, a text most likely filled with adverts for hair care products such as relaxers, and featuring photographs of black women with long, flowing, straightened hair?

### Consider the representation of ethnicity and gender:

- Using a successful, black, British **cover star** as their dominant image, *Pride* is presenting a **role model** for its readers but, importantly, someone from their community. Harris was raised in a single-parent household and came from a working class background. This very 'normal' upbringing makes it easier for the readers to aspire to be like her. The magazine declares itself to be "the face of this new young black Britain; outgoing, confident and ambitious, whilst still maintaining pride in their culture and origins" (<http://pridemagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Pride-MediaPack2015.pdf>), so having Naomie Harris, who appears to epitomise all of this, works very well.



- **Stereotypical representation of femininity**, especially in relation to body image:
  - »» Harris is also attractive and slim – this is no coincidence. For women, it is a constant struggle to be successful by holding down a job, whilst also looking good and dressing fashionably. The very essence of all women's lifestyle magazines is consumerism, and so the images and cover lines will always seek to support this. This is just as true of *Pride* as it is of *Vogue*, *Marie Claire* and *Elle*.
  - »» Cover lines like "How far would you go to be beautiful?" suggest that the reader cannot already be naturally beautiful, there is always room for improvement. Therefore, black women reading or starring in *Pride* are represented as having just as many beauty problems as their white peers. The importance of body image and consumerism doesn't change just because of skin colour.
  - »» In *Pride*, readers are reminded that they could and should look better and that they will be judged on their appearance – "objectified, sexualised, mocked. Black women's bodies examined." The subtext of all of this is no different from any other lifestyle magazine – you are inadequate.

**Consider the representation of issues:**

- It's also worth considering the representation of the issue of FGM. The initial belief that the magazine is including some hard hitting journalism doesn't completely hold together when you read the second line, stating that it is happening on Harley Street, an area of London well known for cosmetic procedures. From this, we could argue that the magazine's only angle when covering this issue is wholly focused on beauty and body image.
- However, perhaps it could still be seen as a brave move to put it on the cover of a popular lifestyle magazine, bringing a very serious topic into the public domain.
- Furthermore, the exclamation mark makes the magazine's point of view on the topic clear, illustrating a tone of shock. The statement suggests that, for some people, the practice is more about aesthetics than religion, culture or tradition. This is another way that the magazine is able to engage with their target audience as, for them, the idea that some women are paying for FGM at expensive clinics is shocking.

**Possible areas for further investigation:**

- **Theoretical perspectives** on representation (could reference theorists, e.g. Stuart Hall) – stereotyping, selection and perhaps how, in some ways, this magazine seeks to move away from the typical representations of ethnicity and gender, but in other ways cannot help but reinforce them.
- We might want to consider the **image as a commodity**. Most of the images used on a women's magazine cover are produced to sell and advertise the magazine. If there wasn't an attractive figure on the front, the magazine may not stand out and sell as many copies.

# GQ

(August 2019)



Image from Hunter & Gatti for British GQ / Fair Use

## GCSE Component 1: Exploring the Media

### Focus areas:

- **Media language**
- **Representation**
- **Media contexts**

### THE PRODUCT

- Launched in 1931, *GQ* began its life as a quarterly publication called Gentleman's Quarterly, aimed specifically at fashion industry insiders. Its popularity with customers caused its rebranding in 1967 to *GQ*.
- Produced by Condé Nast, today *GQ* is a multi-platform brand. Each issue is published in print and digitally; it has its own acclaimed website and apps.
- Published monthly, British *GQ* sells itself as *"The greatest magazine around. The men's magazine with an IQ. Whether it's fashion, sport, health, humour, politics or music, GQ covers it all with intelligence and imagination."*
- *GQ* is aimed at ABC1 men aged between 20 and 44, has a 212,000 monthly print readership, with online boasting over 2 million monthly unique users, and more than 2 million social media followers.
- Funded by magazine sales and advertising, *GQ* says that 88% of its audience have bought or plan to buy products they've seen in *GQ* and 93% of *GQ*'s audience own designer fashion.
- The limited colour palette of black, white, gold and orange create a sense of cohesion to the design, whilst also reinforcing the magazines messages of luxury, sophistication and masculinity.
- There is a long shot of footballer and celebrity Raheem Sterling, ensuring the magazine has star appeal for the audience.
- The cover price further reinforces this is a print magazine aimed at an ABC1 audience with disposable income.
- Consider the selection process that took place when creating this magazine cover – there was clearly a conscious decision to aim it at men who are interested in fashion, celebrity, politics, music and sport.
- Sterling is looking directly at the audience, seemingly making eye contact. This is a common convention of magazines and helps to add to the more personal approach of this format. His cool, relaxed gaze and slight smile looks down at the reader, suggesting he should be admired, looked up to.
- Sterling's leather combat trousers and boots are more high fashion than practical and connote luxury and masculinity, whilst also indicating to readers that *GQ* is a lifestyle magazine.
- Sterling's professional role as a footballer is anchored in the main cover line *"Guardian Angel. How Raheem Sterling saved football from itself"*. *GQ* calls Sterling a *"Guardian Angel"*, which has multiple connotations, including a sense of guidance and protection, suggesting he is looking after players and the values of the game by rooting out racism. The idea that he is doing morally good work is reinforced through his black angel wings and cross tattoo. This also frames him as a Proppian Hero, which is conventional for magazine cover stars.
- The top cover lines *"How to wear a broken suit"* and *"Why it's finally OK to own a belt bag"* should be considered when thinking about the magazine's target audience. In today's competitive society, which focuses heavily on aesthetics and where having the 'right' look is apparently very important, the reader begins to

## PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media language

### How media language creates and communicates meaning

The typical codes and conventions of print magazines are used here to construct the *GQ* front cover:

- The branded masthead is conventionally placed in the top left-hand corner (Z-rule) and stands out with the choice of gold font, connoting luxury and exclusivity – traits that the brand associates with.



think of this magazine as a casual ‘how to’ guide when it comes to being a fashionable man.

- At the top right of the page, there is another cover line advertising a picture special from ‘*GQ Heroes*’. “*All the sizzle*” implies gossip and celebrity intrigue, while the term “exclusive” suggests the reader won’t be able to find it anywhere else and they need to purchase the magazine to be in on the secrets.
- On the right-hand side of the page the reader is offered some politics, “*Westminster has become a living nightmare. Andy Burnham’s Manchester masterplan.*” This hyperbolic language is a reference to the elected Mayor of Manchester, Andy Burnham, who is calling for more devolved power to be given to cities rather than held by the government in London. By including some serious journalism, as well as entertainment and fashion advice, the magazine is broadening its offering for its audience members.

### Possible areas for further investigation:

- **Genre:** codes and conventions of magazine covers – layout, house style, by-lines. Genre conventions of magazines, their ever-changing nature and hybridity.
- **Narrative:** cover lines on the front cover tease people to want to read certain stories within the magazine (could be linked to Roland Barthes’ enigma codes), for example “*Speak no evil. Inside the most brutal dictatorship you’ve never heard of.*”

## PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Representation and contexts

### Social, cultural and historical contexts:

- Historically, British black men have been under-represented on magazine front covers due to systemic racism within the industry. In a 2018 study, completed by The Guardian, into glossy magazines, it was revealed that of 214 covers published by the 19 bestselling glossies in 2017, only 20 featured a person of colour. That’s 9.3%, whereas 13.7% of the UK are BAME. Of all the mainstream media outlets there has arguably been the smallest shift in magazine front covers

representing a diverse range of people. However, sister magazine at Conde Nast, *Vogue* appointed editor Edward Enninful in 2017. He has turned one of the nation’s most respected fashion magazines into a celebration of all beauty – not excluding blackness but championing it. This, alongside the 2020 global anti-racism protests, has meant that recently there has been a wider range of ethnicities and races on the front of British *GQ*.

- In 1994, Mark Simpson – an author and journalist – coined the word ‘Metrosexual’. He is famously quoted as saying “*I had seen the future of masculinity and it was moisturised.*” In the early 2000s it became more socially acceptable for men to openly care about their looks, clothing and skincare regime. Men’s magazines embraced this through their content and advertising and according to the magazine, 80% of its readers buy at least one male grooming product per month. In 2014, Simpson then introduced the term ‘spornosexuals’, men who are extremely body focused. The selection of the *GQ* cover shot, with Sterling’s six-pack and muscles on show, even though he is a footballer, supports this concept.
- In December 2018, Raheem Sterling took to social media to highlight racism in the British press. Sterling screen-grabbed two MailOnline articles, which juxtaposed how his Manchester City teammates (Phil Foden and Tosin Adarabioyo) had been treated for buying their mums a house. Sterling used his platform to highlight this racial inequality in response to personally receiving racist abuse on the pitch from fans. That same week in 2018 saw a Tottenham Hotspur supporter arrested for throwing a banana skin at Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and Motherwell’s Christian Mbulu received racial abuse. Since the social media post, Sterling has become a sought-after spokesperson for charities, activists and other social causes. Gary Lineker has called him “*perhaps the most influential player in the game*” off-field. The full *GQ* article by Alistair Campbell can be read on [GQ.co.uk](http://GQ.co.uk) for free.
- *GQ Heroes* is an event aimed at “*luxury business and creative minds*”. Held annually in Oxfordshire, it has a programme of speakers

*“who are shaping society and culture around us”.*

### Representations of ethnicity and gender:

- Using a hugely successful black cover star (Raheem Sterling is British Jamaican) as their dominant image, GQ is presenting a role model for its readers, someone to aspire to be like. Although Sterling's sporting success might be outside of most reader's possibilities, his work ethic, principles and desire to want to better himself is not.
- The choice to represent Sterling topless with his tattoos on show reinforces the stereotype of men as having to be hyper masculine, strong and muscular. The tattoos themselves represent different aspects of his identity – the cross on his chest illustrates his Christian faith, while the baby on his arm represents him as a father. The black wings represent him as a supernatural figure suggesting his extraordinary skills on the pitch. The wings, combined with the main cover line *“Guardian Angel”* and the low angle shot construct him as a protective figure, fighting for justice. His wide stance and the choice of costume represent him as a dominant, confident figure. Meanwhile the thick silver jewellery and watch represent his wealth and modern masculinity.
- The main cover line reads, *“How Raheem Sterling saved football from itself”*. The reader understands this to mean that he is a success on a much grander scale than just the pitch; he is an influencer. His thick silver jewellery reinforces the capitalist ideology that for a man to be thought of as successful you must be wealthy and make a lot of money.
- All the men named on the cover are represented as successful in their own field, which conforms to the genre conventions of glossy magazines. Andy Burnham (white British) is framed as having a *“masterplan”* for Manchester representing men as clever, powerful and forward-thinking. This is juxtaposed with the representation of Machine Gun Kelly (white American), whose life is described as *“insane, wild and totally nuts”*, however this extreme lifestyle is more what the reader would expect from a rapper than a politician, so the cover lines serve to reinforce our preconceived ideas of these roles. The Machine Gun Kelly cover line is not judgemental, but celebratory, inviting readers in to see what his apparently crazy life is like.
- For modern men, there is a societal expectation that they must ‘have it all’ – health, wealth and strength – and the image of Sterling supports this as he epitomizes all three. Also, just like their female counterparts, the very essence of men's lifestyle magazines is consumerism and so the images and cover lines will always seek to support this, informing men of what they supposedly need, *“How to wear a broken suit”* and also showing them what to covet, *“Why it's finally ok to wear a belt bag”*. This is like the female lifestyle magazines that tell their readers how to be beautiful, get fit and dress well. The importance of body image and consumerism doesn't change just because of gender.

### Areas for further investigation:

- The choice of the two women – Gwendoline Christie and Adwoa Aboah – represented on the front cover.
- The changing perception of tattoos in media representations.

# The Guardian

## (18 January 2022)

**What we miss about working in the office**



**A bottle of Warhol 75 please**  
When art and wine collide



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18 January 2022  
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# The Guardian

For 200 years  
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## Cummings accuses PM of lying over No 10 party

**Rosemary Wootton**  
**Healthier Stewart**

Dominic Cummings has accused Boris Johnson of lying after No 10 denied the prime minister was warned against allowing a "bring your own booze" party during the lockdown.

Johnson admitted to parliament last week that he attended drinks in the Downing Street garden May 30, 2020, but claimed he had not asked it was a social gathering.

The event was organised by Johnson's principal private secretary (PPS), Martin Reynolds, who told people to "bring your own booze" but No 10 denies that the prime minister saw the emailed invitation to about 200 staff. It has also denied allegations that two senior staffers warned Johnson not to go ahead with the event, saying this was "not true".

But Cummings, a former senior aide to the prime minister, wrote a new blog post yesterday challenging that account. He said he personally told Reynolds that the invitation broke the rules and claimed Reynolds replied: "So long as it's socially distanced I think it's OK. I'll check with the PM if he's happy for it to go ahead."

Cummings then said that during a discussion over the future of the cabinet secretary and Reynolds, he had said to the prime minister something like: "Martin's invited the briefing to a drinks party, this is what I'm talking about, you've got to grip this situation."

Cummings added: "The PM would it aside. I had told him repeatedly the PPS should be replaced, so had other competent officials who knew the whole structure needed a huge upgrade in personnel and management. He's 6ft 4in, I don't want you replacing him with 10ft 6in person! (Yes, this may be a bit, I went home to bed at 2.30, still very ill from Covid.)"

He claims Reynolds had checked with Johnson whether the party should go ahead, the prime minister agreed it should and they both went to the party.

Another former Downing Street staffer told the Guardian: "It is inconceivable there is no way Martin would go ahead without checking with Boris. There is no way any PPS would. If true



▲ The prime minister, Boris Johnson, jogs with his dog, Elton, through St James's Park near Downing Street yesterday

## UK sending anti-tank weapons to Ukraine

**Donal O'Sullivan**  
**Defence and security editor**

Britain has begun supplying Ukraine with new light anti-tank weapons in response to "disturbingly threatening behaviour from Russia", it was announced yesterday.

The intensifying of military support from the Kremlin continues to step up troop deployments by moving forces into Belarus, which neighbours Ukraine to the north, and is considered the most likely route for any invasion.

"This has led to the decision to supply Ukraine with

## Inquiry launched into Mone over 'VIP lane' deal

**David Gifford**

The House of Lords committee for standards has launched an investigation into the Conservative peer Michelle Mone, relating to the PPE company awarded £40m in government contracts via the "VIP lane" after she referred to the Cabinet Office in May 2020.

The investigation follows a complaint by the Labour peer George Foulkes on 4 January, after the Guardian reported that Mone had appeared to suggest Lady Mone and her husband, the bar of Mone had

financier Douglas Barrowman, were secretly involved in the company, PPE Medpro.

Lord Mone's commission was to investigate whether Mone may have breached the limits made of conduct by failing to declare an interest in the company, and by lobbying for it to be awarded government contracts.

The commissioner confirmed the investigation would be for "alleged involvement in procuring contracts for PPE Medpro, leading to potential conflicts" of three provisions of the Lobbying code, which covers the requirement.

Image from The Guardian / twitter.com

## GCSE Component 1: Exploring the Media

### Focus areas: Media language Representation Media contexts

### THE PRODUCT

- *The Guardian* is a British national daily newspaper with an average daily print circulation of approximately 105,000 in the UK, comprising 53,902 newsstand sales and 51,232 subscriptions (July 2021). Since August 2021, circulation numbers are no longer publicly available.
- *The Guardian* newspaper targets a well-educated, affluent, digitally-savvy, liberal audience. The demographic is 86% ABC1. 54% of *The Guardian* readers are male, and the average age of the print reader is 54. Originally, *The Guardian*'s format was broadsheet, but for cost reasons and changing consumer needs it is now printed in tabloid format.

### PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media language

#### Consider how choice of elements of media language portrays aspects of reality and conveys messages and values:

- The dominant image is a long shot of Boris Johnson jogging with his dog. Dressed in a beanie hat, woollen jumper, shorts, and trainers – it is not a statesmanlike image of the Prime Minister.
- The photograph is anchored with the caption explaining what the prime minister is doing, the name of his dog “Dilyn”, and where he was in the photograph, “St James’s Park”. The fact that he looks so unsportsmanlike implies Johnson’s ineptitude. The fish shorts and the black leather effect trainers are not what we would expect to see a jogger wearing, let alone the Prime Minister, and the whole effect is quite clownish. This would align with the left-wing,

anti-Johnson beliefs of *The Guardian*'s target audience.

- The main headline “Cummings accuses PM of lying over No. 10 Party”, is short, sharp and to the point. The drama of the terms “accuses” and “lying” points to a political spat between Johnson and his former employee Cummings. The fact that it is the Prime Minister who is the subject of this accusation is significant, as they are meant to uphold the highest values in our society, follow the ministerial code, and crucially abide by the rules they pass in parliament.
- The word “party” serves to reinforce Johnson’s clownlike appearance in the image and thematically ties in with the skyline feature about the majority of the readers “miss[ing]” parties, implying the public have been following the rules.
- The theme of Conservative dishonesty continues in the headline “Inquiry launched into Mone over ‘VIP Lane’ deal”, which highlights an investigation into a Conservative peer, who may not have been following The House of Lord’s code of conduct. Overall, this constructs a reality of the Conservatives as dishonourable, in-line with the left-wing values of the paper.
- The coverline – “What we miss about working in the office” – refers to the work from home culture that has emerged since the start of the pandemic. The paper creates a collective identity for the audience with the pronoun “we” and suggests that *The Guardian* sees the majority of their readership as office workers.

#### Codes and conventions of media language:

- The headlines across the front page are focused, factual, and unemotional, which is what we would expect from a broadsheet newspaper.
- The skyline is given over to the *G2* supplement, a regular segment in the paper, which when displayed on newsstands may well be the section people see first. This supplement offers a lighter alternative to the hard-hitting news stories of the rest of the newspaper. Investigating the intertextuality of the office pictures and choice of artist for the wine feature reveals more useful



insights on the target audience and how *The Guardian* appeals to their interests and lifestyle.

### Possible areas for further investigation:

- **Code and conventions** of newspapers – price, layout, use of cover photographs/ images, house style, bylines.
- **Narrative** – headlines used to tease people to want to read certain stories (could be linked to Roland Barthes' enigma codes).

## PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Contexts and representations

### Social & Political contexts:

- From 2019-2020, Dominic Cummings served as Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Chief Political Advisor. Forced out of Downing Street at the end of 2020 after an internal power struggle, Cummings publishes a blog, in which he reveals events and activities that took place during his time at No.10 Downing Street.
- The COVID-19 pandemic is a global pandemic. The disease was first identified in December 2019, before the pandemic was declared in March 2020. As of April 2022, it has caused approx. 6 million deaths globally.
- To help prevent the spread of the disease, the UK went into 'lockdown', where legal measures were put into place to prevent social mixing. At the time of the "bring your own booze" party, this included the banning of indoor gatherings of more than two people from different households, and those found breaking this law could be fined.
- At the start of lockdown, many offices and institutions closed and workers were advised to work from home. In January 2022, although some have returned to offices and workplaces, this is often with reduced numbers and working from home continues for many. Preventative measures in hospitals and healthcare settings include the use of PPE – Personal Protective Equipment – such as masks, visors, gloves, and gowns.
- Ukraine borders Russia and is a post-Soviet democratic republic. The 2019 presidential elections saw the pro-western leader Volodymyr Zelensky come to power; historically, Ukrainian leaders had been pro-Russia. Tensions had long existed in the region, but in December 2021, Russia increased its troop numbers at the Ukrainian Russian border. This move by Russia's President, Vladimir Putin, generated fears of an invasion and Ukraine requested international support.
- *The Guardian* is described as having mainstream left political values. It does not have an affiliation with any political party but does lean towards the left and has a very liberal tradition. It is therefore not surprising that the main photo is unflattering of the right-wing prime minister.
- *The Guardian* is not owned by a group of shareholders like most other newspapers, for whom making a profit is imperative. Therefore, they believe that they can hold true to their core journalistic principles.

### Consider the representation of politicians:

- The front cover is carefully constructed to grab the attention of a typical *Guardian* readership. The political stories have been chosen and laid out in such a way as to appeal to the typical readership.
- Though it doesn't explicitly state an opinion in the style of tabloids (e.g. '*The Sun Says...*'), the choice of these main cover stories portrays the Conservatives as amoral and untrustworthy.
- In both the main photograph and two articles, the Conservatives in question (Johnson and Mone) are portrayed as dishonest.
- The main image in particular shows a politician with none of the typical trappings of a prime minister (formal clothing, statesmanlike environment, composure, and confidence) and as a result, it speaks to a lack of authority and questionable capabilities to hold the office of prime minister.
- The decision to use more inclusive language in the Ukraine story, for example "UK", is suggestive of an article and an issue that the editorial team at *The Guardian* supports and

expects its readers to support. Omitting any mention of the Conservative government or defence secretary, who will have had to make that decision, is indicative of the newspaper's political leanings.

**Consider the functions and uses of stereotypes:**

- In order to communicate the feature quickly, the images of office workers in the skyline display a range of workplace stereotypes for both individuals and events, e.g. the office romance, the geek, the joker. Whilst tabloids use stereotypes frequently in their lead stories, broadsheets tend to reserve their use for entertainment features.

**Possible areas for further investigation:**

- Theoretical perspectives (e.g. Stuart Hall) – representation, stereotype, selection/omission.
- It would be helpful to compare this cover with another from the tabloid right-wing press, such as *The Sun*, to see the methods used to represent politicians and office workers.

# The Sun (01 January 2021)



Image from The Sun / 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021

## Component 1: Exploring the Media

### Focus areas:

Media language

Representation

Media industries

Audiences

Media contexts

### THE PRODUCT

- *The Sun* is a British tabloid daily newspaper owned by News UK, a subsidiary of right-wing, Australian-born American media baron Rupert Murdoch's News Corp.
- It was originally published six days a week until News Corp also started producing *The Sun on Sunday* in 2012.
- *The Sun* has an average daily print circulation of roughly 1.3 million copies in the UK and a daily readership of around 2.3 million (<https://www.hurstmediacompany.co.uk/the-sun-profile/>). *The Sun* stopped releasing its circulation figures in 2020.
- News Corp describe *The Sun* as, "an instigator, an entertainer, a cultural reference point, a finger on the pulse, a daily relationship." The format of the print paper is tabloid, and it is colloquially known as a 'red top'.
- The majority of its print audience is male, C2DE and aged between 35–64 years old.
- In a recent YouGov survey (<https://yougov.co.uk/topics/media/explore/newspaper/TheSun>), 97% of people surveyed had heard of *The Sun*, but only 29% liked it.
- The headline "Join our jabs army" uses an imperative to call readers to action, asking them to volunteer as a steward at the vaccination centres. The choice of the term "army" for the campaign frames Covid as a common, tangible enemy that the readers can help defeat. The use of military language for a medical story is typical of tabloids, who often use it in sports stories too. The use of "our" connotes that *The Sun* is a proactive, dynamic paper that is helping the country.
- The puff "Jabs army" is in the shape of a heart, with a Union Flag image, making it appear like a badge the volunteers might receive or a logo they might wear to connect them to the scheme. The heart juxtaposes the term army, but it connotes that the group's actions will be caring and generous. The flag also implies that helping to 'fight' covid is a matter of national pride and patriotism.
- The main image is a photoshopped picture of the clock face on the Elizabeth Tower (also known as Big Ben). This is an iconic symbol of British culture and would be recognised by most of the audience, especially on 1<sup>st</sup> January when many people would have heard Big Ben tolling at midnight to bring in the new year. The designer has replaced the clock hand with a syringe, which highlights that this story is about vaccinations. The needle pointing to 12 is an indication of the new year arriving, whilst also suggesting to the audience that time is of the greatest importance when it comes to distributing the vaccination. This sense of urgency is reinforced in the body copy of the article, "help get millions vaccinated rapidly".
- The pull quotes have been carefully chosen to appeal to *The Sun*'s mainstreamer audience. Gary Lineker and Kate Garraway are trusted celebrities with personal experiences of Covid-19 within their families, which have been widely reported in the press. Each quote serves a different purpose for the paper. Lineker is

## PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media language

### Consider codes and conventions and how media language communicates meanings:

- The masthead is in block text and uses the colours red and white. Other newspapers in the UK, such as *The Mirror*, *The Sunday People* and *The Daily Star*, all use this design. These are



praising the campaign itself, therefore giving it his endorsement. Meanwhile Garraway's is more emotive and personal, "I see Covid up close with my Derek", using collective pronouns to create a sense of positivity and relatability, "let's all club together".

- The opening to the article is on the right third of the cover, and it begins with "The Sun says...", suggesting the newspaper has real influence and reinforces their strength of opinion on this matter. The standfirst uses flattery, "our fantastic readers", to encourage the audience to get involved in the campaign. Later in the article, they build a sense of community with the use of collective pronouns, "us" and "we", whilst the continued use of direct address "YOU" reinforces the jingoistic tone of the headline.
- The off-lead story positioned in the masthead pictures the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, with his thumbs up. This image connotes positivity and optimism. The byline indicates that this is a political story and will involve the government. This is supported by the headline "PM: Britain Brexpects", which is an intertextual link to two historical British leaders, Churchill and Nelson. By aligning Johnson with these two people, it is clear *The Sun's* ideology in this article is pro-Johnson and pro-Brexit.

### Possible areas for further investigation are:

- **Codes and conventions of newspaper covers** – layout, use of cover photographs/images, house style, mastheads. Emotive vs. formal language to engage different audience responses.
- **Roland Barthes enigma codes** – headlines used to tease people to want to read certain stories.

## PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Contexts and representations

### Social, historical and political contexts:

- COVID-19 is a global pandemic. The disease was first identified in December 2019, before the pandemic was declared in March 2020.
- It was clear that a mass immunisation programme was essential to help prevent the

spread of the disease. At the start of 2020, the world saw unprecedented levels of funding for vaccine research and development (R&D). By December 2020, the UK became the first western country to license a vaccine against Covid, which is astonishingly fast given that, on average, a vaccine usually takes 10–15 years to accomplish. By January 2021, the NHS had delivered more than 1 million vaccinations, colloquially known as jabs.

- On 23 June 2016, citizens of the UK voted to leave the European Union. This was nicknamed 'Brexit'. The vote was very close with 51.9% voting leave and 48.1% voting remain. Boris Johnson was a figurehead of the Leave campaign, which *The Sun* newspaper supported.
- During World War Two, Winston Churchill gave a rallying speech in which he quoted Horatio Nelson, "England expects that every man will do his duty". This was slightly altered to "Britain expects that you too, this day will do your duty" on a World War Two poster and has now become a much-quoted phrase in the tabloid press.
- Kate Garraway is a popular TV broadcaster in the UK, having co-hosted *Good Morning Britain* since 2014, and appearing on numerous shows from *Strictly Come Dancing* to *I'm A Celebrity, Get Me Out of Here*. Her husband, Derek Draper, was left seriously ill after contracting Covid-19.
- Gary Lineker is a former England footballer and now a popular sports presenter on BBC's *Match of the Day*. He has 8.5 million followers on Twitter. In April 2020, he donated £140,000 to the British Red Cross emergency response to the Coronavirus crisis in the UK.
- In its early years, *The Sun* nominally supported the Labour party but has moved back and forth between Labour and the Conservatives, depending on party leadership. Today, *The Sun* is described as having political allegiance to the Conservative party and does not support the EU. The paper has always been very vocal in telling its readers how they should act, whether voting, during lockdown or getting vaccinated. For example, "Boris ticks all the boxes" in 2019,

“Stay home” in 2020 and “As 1.5M miss vax... don’t blow it Britain!” in 2021.

- During the pandemic, news media played a crucial role in communicating public health and policy information. Traditional newspaper coverage and representations of issues were important amidst increasing disinformation and conspiracy theories spread online.
- Militaristic language is so embedded in the government and media’s representation of the medical world that this has come to be normalised by audiences. Hospitals are the ‘frontline’, healthcare workers are ‘heroes’ and we ‘fight’ and ‘battle’ disease.
- The vaccine rollout began in December 2020 and worked in phases, prioritising the population according to vulnerability and age. The UK’s rollout was among the fastest in the world.

### **Consider the representation of events and issues:**

- Covid-19 is represented as an enemy on this front cover with media language framing the pandemic as a war. In line with their previous representations of the pandemic, Covid is a disease to “conquer”. Such language is used in this context to motivate and inspire action in the audience, encouraging them to join the “Jabs army”. The idea that Covid is an invader is reinforced with *The Sun*’s use of nationalistic imagery, including the Union Flag and Big Ben.
- Getting vaccinated is represented as a positive action by *The Sun*. This is clear in their repeated call for readers to support the roll out of vaccinations, “Join our jabs army”. By encouraging the public to join their campaign they are supporting the vaccination programme, making it clear that when the reader’s age group is allowed to get vaccinated, they should. The use of endorsements, along with ‘The Sun says...’ implies the reader should trust its viewpoint. Getting vaccinated is represented as a matter of urgency with the combined use of the clock face, imperative verbs, and terms such as “rapidly”.
- Brexit is represented positively in the off lead. *The Sun* suggests this political decision

has brought “newfound freedom” to the UK, while terms such as “heralded” and “dawn” imply Britain has a great future away from the EU. This is in line with *The Sun*’s pro-leave, isolationist ideology.

## **Section B**

### **PART 3: STARTING POINTS – Media industries**

#### **Industry context:**

- Newspapers used to be hugely profitable, but the industry was not prepared for the arrival of the internet in the 1990s. Premium news was given away for free, and publishers didn’t take control of advertising, opening up a gap for Google and Facebook to fill. As a result, the modern business of news is in relentless decline. The bulk of advertising income is now hoovered up by Google and Facebook and newspapers have had to make significant cuts to their costs, including staff. Over the past decade, media groups have tried various strategies to boost their revenues, from subscription (e.g. *The Times*) and membership (e.g. *The Guardian*) models, to relying solely on advertising and diversification (e.g. *The Sun*).
- Newspapers are self-regulated, with editors expected to follow the Editors’ Code of Practice. If readers find any content in breach of this code, they may complain to the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO).

#### **Consider the nature of media production, including by large organisations, who own the products they produce, and by individuals and groups:**

Newspaper production consists of a series of stages, each overseen by the newspaper’s editor.

#### **Pre-press includes:**

- Newsgathering – the editor sets the agenda for the paper, ideas are generated by journalists, stories are written, photographs are taken, and the editor signs off on stories.
- Advertising – the sales team sells space in the newspaper and on the website to brands looking to promote themselves.

- Design – the newspaper is laid out by a page designer, arranging stories and advertising according to guidelines set by the editor and advertising teams.

#### Press includes:

- Publishing – after editorial sign-off, the paper is published on paper or online.
- Distribution – the finished print paper is sent to newsagents and supermarkets. The digital paper is distributed on *The Sun* app, meanwhile digital stories are pushed-out to Apple News and social media platforms.

#### Areas for further research:

- The newspaper, owner, editor, writers, photographers, designers – exploration of these roles, their position and impact in the production process.
- Synergy with other brands and promotions in order to fund production and/or market the paper.

#### Consider the importance of funding:

- Print newspapers earn revenue from their advertisements and so, in this sense, journalism is being seen more and more as a commodity, whose purpose is both profit and power. £1 in every £7 spent on groceries is spent by a *Sun* reader, making it a very attractive advertising vehicle. In addition to adverts, which are obvious in their purpose, *The Sun* also features advertorials – content written by journalists, which although looking like editorial copy is actually an advert that has been paid for by the brand. An advertorial carries more weight with an audience as it seemingly has the validation of the publication and journalist.
- As circulation figures of print news continues to drop and advertisers are choosing to leave if figures drop too low, newspapers are under increasing pressure to capture audiences. Therefore, online advertising revenues for *The Sun*, as well as diversifying into different areas (e.g. Sun Vegas, Sun Bets, etc.), are essential.

#### Consider the impact of technologies, and convergence:

- Readers can consume all the content from the print newspaper on the website <https://www.thesun.co.uk> for free. Readers can also subscribe to a digital edition of the print newspaper for £4.99 a week. The digital edition of the print newspaper is consumed through *The Sun* app, which is available on iOS and Android devices.
- Statistics around online reach and readership can be slippery, with many newspapers (including *The Mirror* and *MailOnline*) claiming to have the biggest. From a study in 2021 (PAMCo), *The Sun* online reached 6 million people a day. However, their rivals argue it is not quantity, but quality of engagement that matters, and how long each reader spends on the site is more important. *The MailOnline* points to having 5.4 billion minutes of engagement by readers per month across print and digital, versus only 3.1 billion minutes for *The Sun*.
- To boost its engagement beyond its target audience, *The Sun* supplies free content to Apple News. The click-throughs from the UK's most popular news app supply 23% of *The Sun*'s page views.
- Readers can follow *The Sun* on social media platforms too – Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, Snapchat and Instagram. Each account offers different content to different audiences.

**Areas for further research:** examples of stories, adverts and *The Sun* brands to exemplify the use of technology, funding, regulation and audiences.

## PART 4: STARTING POINTS – Audiences

#### Consider target audiences:

- *The Sun*, both online and in print, targets the lower to middle social classes with its biggest audience share coming from the C2DE demographic. Although it is very close, the majority of print and online readers are male. Most of its print readers are between 45 and 64, whereas as many as 60% of online readers are below the age of 34.

- According to [ascento.co.uk](http://ascento.co.uk), the average reading age of the UK population is 9 years old. *The Sun* has a reading age of 8 years. Using words in bold, lots of visuals and smaller chunks of text means they are purposefully making their product accessible to everyone and especially appealing to members of our society who have weaker literacy skills or just want an easy read. This helps explain why *The Sun* is “The People’s Paper” as stated by its tagline. In addition, this way of formatting makes it easier to read at speed, on the daily commute for example, and to skim and scan to find specific articles that interest you.
- Promotions such as Sun Hols, where readers have to collect tokens, appeals to low-income demographics, whilst also building loyalty between the brand and the reader.

### **Consider theoretical perspectives:**

- Active/Passive audience. Historically, readers of print newspapers were considered to be passive (i.e. they read what was in front of them and believed it), especially as there is an expectation that what is shared in the news genre is true. However, it is now understood that audiences are in fact active and read stories according to their own context, beliefs, and values. This potentially changes the way they interpret the information they are given.

**Areas for further research:** examples of layout and design, content, adverts, and *The Sun* brands to exemplify the different appeals to audiences.



# The Archers

## Component 1: Exploring the Media

### Focus areas: Media Industries Audiences Media Contexts

#### BACKGROUND CONTEXT

- *The Archers* is aired on Radio Four, has over 5 million listeners and is considered a significant part of British popular culture. Running for 65 years, with six episodes a week and an omnibus on a Sunday, it is the world's longest running radio soap opera.
- *The Archers* follows the residents of the fictional farming community of Ambridge, in the fictional county of Dorsetshire, in the English Midlands. Its tagline is, "contemporary drama in a rural setting".

#### PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media Industries

##### Historical Context:

- *The Archers* was originally established in 1951 to **educate** farmers which, it was hoped, would increase food production after the second world war. It was thought that the show could be used as a way for the Ministry of Agriculture to communicate important **information** to farmers.

##### Social and Cultural Context

- Wherever possible, *The Archers* happens in **real time** i.e. it portrays **events** taking place on the date of broadcast, allowing a variety of **topical subjects** to be included. If a real-life event can be predicted, it is often written into the script. Even unforeseen events have been weaved into the script with scenes being re-written and re-recorded at short notice such as the 9/11 attacks, the death of Princess Margaret and the 2001 foot and mouth crisis.

##### Consider the importance of different funding models and production processes:

- Like TV, radio broadcasting falls into two categories: **public service** and **commercial** broadcasting. Commercial broadcasting is funded

by the sale of advertising slots and public service broadcasting is funded by public money either directly from the government or a licence fee. In the UK, **BBC radio is funded by a licence fee**.

- *The Archers* is aired on **Radio Four**, the BBC's main spoken-word channel, and so is funded by the licence fee. The BBC has a **public service remit** (to educate, inform and entertain) and *The Archers* was originally established to **educate** farmers. The show soon became a major source of **entertainment** for people from all walks of life, not just the rural community. However, the show still prides itself on the quality of its research and its ability to portray real rural life.
- **Producing** a radio series like *The Archers* requires tight **schedules** and long term **planning**.
  - »» The production team meet biannually to plan the following months, and sometimes even years' worth of storylines.
  - »» Monthly script meetings then take place where four writers have to produce a week's worth of scripts each.
  - »» Recording takes place every four weeks and actors only receive their scripts a few days before. Actors are employed for six days in which they record 24 episodes. There is very little room for error as each 13 minute episode is only allocated two hours of studio time.
  - »» Episodes are then broadcast 3-6 weeks after recording.
- Due to these recording schedules, actors are not held on retainers and are not employed full time on a show and often have careers in film, theatre, television and other radio shows.

##### Consider regulation of the media:

- Radio broadcasting is regulated by **Ofcom**, the government-approved regulatory authority for broadcasting. Ofcom sets **standards** for programmes and one of its duties is to examine specific **complaints** by listeners about programmes broadcast on channels that it has licenced.

##### Consider the impact of technologies and convergence:

- In order to keep up with the different

ways people prefer to **consume** their media, there are a variety of **ways for fans to engage** with the show:

- »» Aside from the **regular radio slot**, listeners can catch up with the **omnibus** on a Sunday, hear recent episodes repeated on **BBC Radio Four Extra**, download the **podcast**, or listen 'on demand' through **BBC iPlayer Radio**.
- »» Alternatively, they can check out *The Archers*' page on the **BBC website**, follow the show on **social media** by following it on **Twitter** or liking their **Facebook** page.
- »» All of these **platforms** are provided to help audiences increase their enjoyment of the show and make it as accessible as possible for them to keep up to date with it.

### The Brand

- *The Archers* is big business for the BBC as it's the most listened to BBC programme online. In today's society, **market share and brand identity** are massively important and *The Archers* succeeds on both of these. If the BBC was ever to lose its **licence fee**, there are certain shows that it is guaranteed people would pay to subscribe to – *The Archers* is one of these. Therefore, it's important that the producers keep the show fresh. One way of doing this is by introducing new characters or pushing the boundaries on plotlines.

## PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Audiences

### Social Context

Not one to shy away from controversy, the BBC has opened the gates to less talked about topics and issues in recent years. The **domestic abuse storyline** of Rob and Helen has been building for some time. The **listeners' privileged position** of being able to eavesdrop in on characters' private conversation has added a very real touch to the storyline. Audiences have witnessed first-hand Rob's controlling nature, his coercive behaviour and insidious ways (e.g. constantly undermining Helen's looks and clothing), and listened whilst he has progressively isolated her from friends and family. The **realistic portrayal** of this storyline has even prompted audiences to raise over £100,000 in charitable donations, proving the **importance** of such a show – and the strong relationship it has forged with its **audience**.

### Consider the ways in which media organisations target audiences:

- Historically, radio soap operas have always

focused primarily on women's lives, particularly family relationships, domesticity and marriage. Therefore the target audience was traditionally **females** who looked after the home.

- Listeners from different walks of life could engage with the show in different ways due to its multi-stranded **narratives**. As a listener you might be rooting for one particular character whilst your friend might be interested in another character relationship entirely.
- *The Archers* is perceived as a high quality soap opera and distinguishes itself from TV soaps by providing soap for the educated middle-classes. Radio Four has a **high cultural status** and so the audience for *The Archers* consists mainly of well-educated middle-class professionals, most of whom are middle aged and above, white women.

### Consider how audiences may respond to and interpret media products, and the social, cultural and political significance of media products:

- For many of these listeners, *The Archers* was a **familiar friend** which provided a comforting background and, until fairly recently, there was an unwritten rule that nothing too terrible would ever happen.
- However, in recent years some listeners have complained that *The Archers* is beginning to mimic the excesses of TV soaps such as *EastEnders*. The most notable example of this is the 2016/17 storyline of Rob's abusive relationship with his wife. For some listeners, the show they once considered to be light, mellow drama, has now morphed into actual **melodrama**.
- That being said, such a move has attracted **new listeners** which are welcomed by the broadcasters, and there is an argument that such shows should reflect the **society** in which they are aired. This move has also given the BBC the opportunity to open a conversation about **topics** like domestic violence.
- Because the BBC can be accessed from around the world, it's important to understand that some of the online audience is **global**, including British people living abroad. Listening to *The Archers* is a crucial way for them to keep in touch with **British life**. In fact, even within the UK, some listeners from urban areas have stated how they like the sense of rural life that is evident in the show. Perhaps, like many, they dream of getting away from the city and moving to the country and *The Archers*

helps them imagine this for a short time.

- If we consider Blumler and Katz's **Uses and Gratifications theory**, we could argue that audience members listen for all of those given reasons:
  - »» simply for **entertainment**/diversion from their everyday lives
  - »» to be **informed or educated** about rural life or topical issues that the

storyline may be dealing with

- »» for **social interaction** to discuss with family/friends or by continuing the conversation on Twitter or Facebook
- »» for **personal identity**, to compare their life experiences with those of the characters.

# Fortnite

(2017)





# Fortnite

(2017)

## Component 1: Exploring the Media

**Focus areas:**  
**Media industries**  
**Audiences**

### PRODUCT CONTEXT

- Produced by Epic Games, the *Fortnite* **franchise** is a series of multiplayer **free-to-play** battleground games available on a number of platforms and devices. It was launched in July 2017
- The franchise includes *Fortnite: Battle Royale*, *Fortnite: Save The World*, and *Fortnite: Creative*
- Fortnite: Battle Royale* is the most successful free-to-play videogame ever, making \$1.2 billion in the first 10 months of release. Initially, players had to buy 'battle passes' to play, but in September 2018 the *Battle Royale* version was offered for free.
- The *Fortnite* franchise had **revenue** of £2.4 billion in 2018
- The franchise has helped make Epic Games a hugely successful company. In 2012 they were worth \$825 million; in 2018 they were worth \$5.8 billion.
- Fortnite: Battle Royale* won 'Best Ongoing Game' in the PC Gamer and IGN awards in 2018.

### Gameplay

- Players, in groups of 100, are dropped via a flying bus onto a deserted island that is about to be hit by a natural disaster.
- The aim of the game is to fight to the death, with the last player standing the winner. Players seek out weapons and other materials, but are also able to demolish structures and rebuild them into forts, towers etc.
- As the game continues, the storm starts to encroach, driving the players into smaller and smaller areas and forcing conflict.
- In terms of **genre**, *Fortnite* could be considered as fusion of battle games (like *Battlegrounds*) and construction games (like *Minecraft*).

## PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media industries

### Social and cultural contexts:

The global videogame industry has been growing since the early days of Atari home entertainment in the 1980s. In recent years, the diversity of game genres and platforms on which they can be played has meant an explosion in the gaming industry. Based on a 2015 economic forecast videogame sales are expected to reach \$90 billion by 2020.

In 2014, it was calculated there were 1.8 billion gamers in the world - 25% of the global population. This challenges the stereotype of gamers as young geeky men. In 2018 in the USA, 28% of gamers were under 18, but 23% were over 50 years old. There was a 66/44% male/female gender split.

The range of genres - from first-person-shooters to puzzles and learning tools - has varied the demographic for gamers. The variety of platforms - not just home consoles, but on tablets and smartphones - that high quality, complex and engaging games can be accessed has also led to the growth of the industry.

Gaming has increasingly become a social activity. In 1997 Ultima Online became the first on-line multiplayer game, and since then socialising in the game world has become an everyday activity for millions of people, usually geographically far apart. People develop alliances, friendships and even romantic relationships as their game characters. 'eSports' - live competitive gaming events between celebrity players has also become popular, attracting millions of viewers through sites like Twitch and even packing huge stadiums like traditional sporting events.

### Consider the impact of new technology and convergence:

- One of the things that have made *Fortnite* so popular is the ability to access the game from consoles, PCs, laptops, smartphones or tablets. You can also download it for a range of operating systems. Not only this but you

can move, mid-game, between devices without interrupting gameplay. This means it can be played at home, or on the move, on a tiny screen or a video projector. This is a good example of **technological convergence**.

- Epic Games use an operating system called Unreal Engine to develop *Fortnite*. They have made this available on their website, and encourage their audience to use it to develop their own games. Unreal Engine has also been used by professional game developers to create titles like *Batman: Arkham City* and *Infinity Blade*.
- *Fortnite* is also a good example of **cross-media convergence**, where more than one media brand or form joins to promote each other. *Fortnite* is the most viewed game on YouTube, and has also used streaming platforms like Twitch (owned by Amazon) to broadcast live competitions.
- It has also incorporated other media **brands** and **franchises**. In collaboration with Marvel Studios, there was a special *Avengers: Infinity War* segment and recently a tie-in with *Godzilla*. The format of *Fortnite* means that any kind of costumes, weapons and games can be introduced to keep the game fresh. Films/TV/sports can promote their brands to over 20 million of players, whilst famous collaborations keep *Fortnite* in the news and social media.
- Epic Games has a good relationship with various non-gaming celebrities such as Drake and basketball star Ben Simmons. This helps to promote the game beyond the traditional gaming market.

## Consider Epic Games as an institution:

- Epic Games was started by Tim Sweeney in 1991 and was originally run from his parent's house. These humble beginnings may explain Epic's decision to make the Unreal Engine available to amateur games designers.
- In 2014, the *Guinness Book Of Records* named Unreal Engine as the 'most successful videogame engine'
- Epic Games owns video game developer Chair Entertainment and cloud-based software developer Cloudgine, and has sub-studios in the UK, Japan, and Germany.
- Tencent - a Chinese investment company focused on internet and AI development - bought a 42% stake in Epic in 2012.

## Consider different funding and profit models:

- *Fortnite* is an example of the '**Games as a Service**' (GaaS) model - where there is a constant revenue stream from '**in-game purchases**' after the initial purchase (or providing the game for free)
- Some of these are '**micro transactions**' where players pay for weapon, costume and game upgrades rather than 'grinding through' the gameplay to score them. In *Fortnite*, players use V-bucks to purchase these items, and these can be earned in the game or bought using 'real world' money. Another game that does this is *Candy Crush*.
- Unusually in *Fortnite* the upgrades are purely 'cosmetic' i.e. they don't actually affect the gameplay. They often consist of new 'skins' (to alter your character's appearance) and 'emotes' (victory dance moves after a kill). These are only available for a short period of time, increasing their value and encouraging players to pay rather than 'grind' for them.
- Another revenue stream for GaaS titles is to offer '**season passes**' - like a subscription that allows you to access new content over the course of a period of gameplay (the 'season') that play-for-free users can't access.
- *Fortnite* offers players 'battle passes' and then drip-feeds limited edition and exclusive content to these players over the course of the season.

## Consider regulation of the media:

- **Age ratings** are systems used to ensure that entertainment content, such as computer games, are clearly labelled by age according to the content they contain. Age ratings provide guidance to consumers (particularly parents) to help them decide whether or not to buy a particular product. The rating on a game confirms that it is suitable for players over a certain age.
- In 2012 the **PEGI** system was incorporated into UK law and The Video Standards Council was appointed as the statutory body responsible for the age rating of video games in the UK using the PEGI system.
- *Fortnite* has the PEGI rating of 12 for "frequent scenes of mild violence". It seems that parents are more concerned with issues surrounding addiction than the levels of violence.

## PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Audience

### Historical and Political Contexts

The relationship between videogames and audiences has been a controversial area, with many **moral panics**. These ranged fears that violent games encourage **copycat** behaviour, to worries about addiction and the amount of ‘**screen time**’ that is healthy. *Fortnite*, when compared to other successful titles like *Grand Theft Auto* or *Call Of Duty* contains very little explicit or realistic violence, and the cartoon-like graphics also make the game suitable for younger players. In addition, there seems to be little racism or misogyny expressed by the players compared to other videogames - perhaps because free players are randomly assigned race and gender ‘skins’ at the start of each round. Critics have also praised the **collaborative** nature of the gameplay that encourages players to work together and protect each other (until the finale).

The main concern seems to be about addiction: with reports from teachers and parents that children are distracted from school work due to their engagement. One psychologist even compared it to heroin! There have been reports that Premier League footballers were being treated for addiction, and Prince Harry said the game is ‘dangerous’.

### Consider the way media industries target audiences:

- *Fortnite* has used a combination of addictive gameplay, media/technological convergence and marketing to target a diverse and varied audience. 78% are male, 22% are female, 53% are 10-25, and 42% are in full time employment.
- The unrealistic violence and cartoon-style graphics, along with the emphasis on construction as much as killing, make it appealing to a younger audience.
- The rise of ‘eSports’ stars, mainly consumed via streaming platforms like YouTube and Twitch (where *Fortnite* is the most watched game) has led to players becoming major

celebrities. Ninja, the most famous *Fortnite* player has over 10 million subscribers and earns over half a million dollars a month. Ninja ranks highest in the world for social media interactions (i.e. people posting or sharing using their name - no.2 is Cristiano Ronaldo!

- This creates gamer celebrities that have become **aspirational role-models** for some audiences.
- The use of **non-traditional** gamer celebrities such as rappers and NBA athletes widen the appeal of the game. The popularity of ‘Twitch Girls’ (female streamers like KatyPlaysGames) has also appealed to women.
- *Fortnite*’s use of ‘seasons’ - with rumours and gossip about future seasons - follows the cable TV/ on-line subscription style of **long-form TV drama**.

### Consider active and passive audience responses:

- The basic gameplay of *Fortnite: Battle Royale* is interactive and collaborative, encouraging players to work together. By being able to deconstruct and rebuild the game environment, players are encouraged to be creative.
- *Fortnite: Creative* is a different format that allows even more creativity in designing ‘skins’, ‘emotes’ and landscapes.
- In addition, Epic Games have made their operating system Unreal Engine available (at a price) to encourage the next generation of games developers.

### Consider theoretical perspectives:

- Blumler and Katz’s ‘**Uses and Gratifications**’ theory considers why people interact with media texts.
- *Fortnite* - along with many videogames - could relate to the ‘**escapism**’ and ‘**catharses**’.
- However, the collaborative nature of the gameplay could also provide **social interaction**.
- The use of gamer and non-gamer celebrities could also relate to the search for role-models that contribute to personal identity. This could be linked to **Dyer’s ‘Star Theory’**.